Your Living Birth & Postpartum Plan

Plan with intention. Leave room for life. Birth and postpartum may unfold differently than you imagined. This plan gives your preferences a voice while leaving room to adapt with your care team as your needs and circumstances change. Changing the plan is not a failure.

Start With Today

Perinatal means the time around pregnancy and birth. Postpartum is the period after birth. Support can be useful before your baby arrives and as your recovery and family needs change.

Ask: “What would make the next few hours more manageable?” It might be a meal, a ride, someone to listen, or help contacting your care team. You do not have to finish this whole guide today.

Make A Small Support Plan

- ☐ Care: Keep your care team’s daytime and after-hours numbers, your baby’s clinician, and the nearest emergency department close.
- ☐ People: Choose someone to coordinate practical help, if a person is available.
- ☐ Basics: Identify help with meals, laundry, transport, older children, pets, and appointment reminders.
- ☐ Preferences: Decide who may visit, how long visits can last, and what help you want.

One small thing that could help me today:

Use this guide alone, with a trusted person, or alongside your healthcare team. It offers educational planning prompts, not medical care or a booked service.

Before Birth: Ask Your Care Team

- ☐ Who do I contact about a concern, including after hours?
- ☐ What follow-up will I need after birth, and when should I arrange it?
- ☐ What support is available for feeding, recovery, and emotional wellbeing?
- ☐ How should I adapt plans for my health history, access needs, or circumstances?
- ☐ How can my birth setting, support people, comfort and communication preferences be supported?
- ☐ If circumstances change, how will options be explained and decisions discussed with me?

A support plan can change. It is not a test of how well you prepare.

After Birth: Reduce The Load

- ☐ Ask someone to prepare food, bring groceries, or organize a meal delivery.
- ☐ Arrange help with dishes, laundry, bottles, pets, or older children.
- ☐ Decide who can help with transport and appointment reminders.
- ☐ Share your visitor boundaries and what practical help would be useful.
- ☐ Ask the appropriate clinician about feeding questions, recovery concerns, and sleep difficulties.

Try a clear request: “Could you bring dinner Wednesday and leave it at the door?” Or: “Can you sit with me while I call my provider?”

A task I could ask someone to take on:

Making Room For Your Experience

You may feel love, grief, relief, uncertainty, or several things at once. You do not owe visitors a cheerful version of your experience. Tell your healthcare provider about distress, anxiety, exhaustion, or other changes that concern you or interfere with daily care.

After pregnancy loss or an unexpected birth experience, you can ask what emotional and practical support is available without sharing more than you want.

Your priorities may shift. Revisit the plan when something changes, ask questions, and make space for your current needs rather than judging yourself against an earlier version.

Know When To Get Medical Care

Pregnancy-related urgent problems can happen during pregnancy and in the year afterward. Get medical care immediately for urgent warning signs. Examples include chest pain, difficulty breathing, severe or worsening headache, vision changes, fainting, fever of 100.4°F / 38°C or higher, severe belly pain, or heavy bleeding after birth. This is not a complete list.

If you think there is a life-threatening emergency, call your local emergency number (911 in the U.S.). Tell the medical team you are pregnant or were pregnant within the last year. Do not wait for an email reply or routine support appointment.

If something feels wrong or you are unsure, contact your healthcare provider. Read the full CDC warning-sign guidance: cdc.gov/hearher/maternal-warning-signs/.

More Support, At Your Pace

The Mother Haus offers nonmedical support with CEG. Scope, price, location, and availability are confirmed by inquiry. Initial 15-minute consultations are free; reading this resource does not book a service.

Explore postpartum support at thelivinggarden.love/the-mother-haus/postpartum-support/

Copy Your Plan Into A Notebook

Use these spaces or copy the prompts into your own notebook. Leave anything blank that does not fit. You can also create a personal copy through the online guide.

My care team and after-hours number:

My next appointment and transport plan:

Someone I can ask for help:

One practical task they could take on:

A visitor boundary I want to communicate:

One question for my provider:

Trusted Starting Points

Practical planning prompts: The Mother Haus / Garden of CEG. Medical warning-sign information: CDC Hear Her campaign. These resources do not replace individualized medical care.

Your online guide and personal planner
https://thelivinggarden.love/guides/perinatal-postpartum-support/

CDC: speaking with your care team
https://www.cdc.gov/hearher/pregnant-postpartum/

CDC: supporting someone during pregnancy and postpartum
https://www.cdc.gov/hearher/caring/index.html