

Sample Letter To Visitors About Postpartum Visitation

Dear Loved Ones,

We are approaching the final weeks of pregnancy, and are very excited to start this new chapter of our lives with this beautiful baby we are bringing into the world. Something we are anticipating the most about being parents is sharing this experience with you and watching our baby bond with you all! We know that he/she will have a very special and unique relationship with you and we are so grateful for you in our lives.

We do have some requests and favors to ask of you during the postpartum time. We have recently learned how important good nutrition and rest is during the postpartum time and are going to try a new strategy to ensure _____ (mother's name) _____ is well-nourished and rested during the first six weeks after the birth.

We have been busily preparing for the arrival of our baby boy/girl and are very excited to share our plans for creating a peaceful and healthy postpartum recovery time. Postpartum depression rates are very high in America, but with our plan in place, we hope to thrive—not just survive—during this special time, and are requesting your help in making it happen! Before we share our plan and visitation protocols with you, we would like to take a moment to explain why we are trying a strategy that may be very different than usual. We believe knowledge is power and when we are all aligned with the same philosophy, anything is possible!

The Physical, Mental, and Emotional Realities of Birth and Postpartum Recovery

Once we gained an understanding of what the mother's body and mind go through to birth a baby, recover from the birth, and produce high-quality breastmilk, we had a much better understanding of why good nutrition and rest is so important. Here is what we learned:

- Giving birth to a baby is metabolically equivalent to running a marathon. After running a marathon, most marathon runners take a few days off work, plan to have someone cook nutritious meals for them, and get a massage. The difference between marathon runners and postpartum mothers is marathon runners usually aren't taking care of a baby during recovery time. We plan to give _____ as good of treatment as a marathon runner—hopefully even better!
- The first few days after birth, _____'s body will be transitioning from gestation to lactation, while also healing from birth injuries, requiring a tremendous amount of energy. That energy is fueled by nutrient-rich food and lots of rest. In order to make sure her energy is going toward these vital activities, we will make sure _____ doesn't have to do anything else except rest, eat nutritious food (served to her in bed) and feed the baby.
- _____'s hormones will play a MAJOR role in the milk coming in and how well she bonds with the baby. We all have what are called “love hormones (oxytocin)” and “stress hormones (cortisol).” These two hormones are not compatible during the postpartum. If _____ is well cared for and the home environment is peaceful, oxytocin will flow, and her milk can flow too! Oxytocin also plays a role in attachment bond, helping _____ to fall in love with our baby boy/girl. When moms are well-fed and cared for, they feel loved, and when they feel loved oxytocin flows. BUT, if

_____’s environment is stressful, she doesn’t get adequate rest, and eats random food, the stress hormone, Cortisol, might be released instead. This could impact her milk flow and ability to bond with the baby. If it continues, it could lead to postpartum depression and anxiety. We really don’t want to start our parenting journey like that!

- *Postpartum mother’s nervous systems are wired to learn how to tend to the needs of the baby. She will be exhausted from giving birth and learning how to care for her baby, night and day. Rest, a low-stimulation environment, and good nutrition will keep her nervous system at ease, allowing her to tune into the baby’s signals, cues and rhythms. Even one friendly visit from a family member can unintentionally throw off the baby’s sleeping and feeding rhythms _____ will be trying to establish, causing her to skip a much needed nap to accommodate the friend/family member.. t can also cause set-backs in her healing process, which may take days to recover from. Both the hormone system and nervous system are designed to help _____ listen to her mothering instincts, and it is vitally important that she receives high-quality care, nutritious food, and a calm environment to facilitate this. .*
- *Even _____’s brain will be changing during the first six weeks after birth! Neuroscientists have proven that during the postpartum time, the neural pathways in a mother’s brain does something called “**synaptic pruning**,” which is just like pruning a fruit tree. By cutting off pathways that lead to the **prefrontal cortex** (logical, rational thinking part of the brain), her mental energy is diverted to her **amygdala** (primal part of the brain where she learns caregiving, feels empathy, love, and a deep desire to care for her baby). Strengthening neural pathways to this part of the brain by “pruning” is how mothers learn to love and care for their baby. However, in order for those pathways to become activated, she needs to be well rested, cared for, and nourished. Tasks like socializing, , thinking about work/emails, organizing the carpool, figuring out what to cookare all activities that take her away from her amygdala and back into her prefrontal cortex, thus overworking her and stressing her out!. We hope to do our best to take care of _____ in a way that supports this brilliant mechanism in the brain so that she can enjoy bonding with our baby!*

Now that you have a better understanding of the physiological and neurological realities of the postpartum time, we hope you will understand why we have chosen to wait until after the first 40 days to welcome visitors into the home.

We do, however, need lots of help executing our postpartum care and nourishment plan! If you would like to contribute to the caregiving plan during this time, we would be so honored to have your support!

We have created a google sheet for people to sign up to help with household tasks, taking care of ____ (older children)____, and cooking from our postpartum meal plan. If you would like to contribute to making this the postpartum of our dreams, please see below for more details about how you can sign up on the google sheet and provide support.

You are so important to us, and the support you provide for _____’s will enable her to have a high-quality postpartum experience. Your love and nourishment will help lay the foundation for us to have a healthy and strong family life together. We are creating a beautiful legacy of love in our family for generations to come, and we couldn’t do it without your support!

We feel so blessed to have you in our lives and are so excited to share this parenting journey with you! Your understanding, love, and support means everything to us!

With love and gratitude,

_____, _____, and ___Baby Boy/Girl___

For the Google Spreadsheet.....

Sign Up Sheet

Tasks For Nourishing Mary Beth During Postpartum Time

Visitation Protocol and How You Can Help

If you are part of the support team, _____(designated person)_____ will coordinate all the food deliveries, household tasks and other types of support. Here is her contact info: ___(phone and email)___.

We have created a WhatsApp group where we will be posting photos, videos, and updates on how _____ and the baby are doing.

As soon as we get through the first six weeks of postpartum, we will reach out to you and schedule your visits. Thank you for understanding; we really appreciate all your love and support!

If you are interested in signing up for a task, please see the task description and spreadsheet here.

You are so important to us and your support for _____'s high-quality postpartum care and nourishment means the world to us!

With the deepest of gratitude and love,

_____, _____ and Baby boy/girl

TASK: Meals, Snacks and Teas -Preparation and Cooking

The meals, snacks, and teas _____ will be consuming the first 40 days after birth will be very easy to digest, freshly-cooked, warm, and appropriate for the stage of healing she is in at the time. An example of such meals are homemade bone broths, soups, lactation muffins, and lactation teas. We will be gradually increasing the complexity of the food we prepare for her

based on how well her body is healing. We are using very specific recipes that are designed to help mothers heal and produce breastmilk.

If you are interested in helping us cook these nourishing recipes, please let us know and we will assign you a recipe from our meal plan.

TASK: Supporting __ (mother's name) __ in Resting

After learning about the importance of rest for postpartum mothers during the first 40 days after birth, we have decided to do everything we possibly can to optimize her ability to rest and bond with the baby. This might sound strange, but, during the vulnerable first 40 days after birth, if a mother is well rested and cared for, she will be stronger physically, mentally, and emotionally for the next 40 years of her life. Here are some ways we will be creating a home environment where she will be able to rest, heal, and bond with the baby:

--We will delegate all domestic chores, including shopping, laundry and cleaning to others.

--We will dedicate 1-2 people to preparing and cooking her meals, snacks, and teas.

--We will deliver her meals to her in bed for the first 21 days following the birth.

--We will encourage her to receive massage and belly binding daily or every other day for the first 3 weeks after the birth.

--We will encourage _____ to sleep when the baby sleeps.

--We will keep a very low stimulation environment (minimal screens).