

# Starting up at home without maternity care



Congratulations on the birth of your baby!

In this brochure we provide you with information about caring for yourself and your baby in the first hours at home.

## Points of interest and advice for mother and baby for the first evening and night

The first night after giving birth can be intense. You may be tired from the birth and your baby is introduced to life outside the womb.

It takes energy to interrupt your sleep and to be patient. Try to stay as calm as possible.

## Postnatal care for you

- **To pee**

It is important to drink well. We recommend that you go to the toilet to urinate every 3 hours after delivery and preferably before every feeding, even without urgency. With an empty bladder, the uterus can contract optimally. This is necessary to stop the blood loss. Rinse your vagina with lukewarm water to prevent infections and a burning sensation when urinating. You can use a water bottle in the toilet or you can urinate in the shower. Ensure good hand hygiene before and after every toilet visit.

- **Bloos loss**

You can lose quite a lot of blood the first day after giving birth, comparable to a heavy menstrual period. Change the maternity pad every two to three hours. It is normal that it is soaked in blood completely every three hours. You may also occasionally lose a blood clot, which can even be the size of a fist. This is normal within the first 24 hours. If two maternity pads are soaked within half an hour, please contact your midwife.

- **Afterpains**

You may suffer from after-pains after giving birth: your uterus is still contracting. After-pains are, however uncomfortable, useful: they ensure that the uterus contracts, becomes smaller and regains its old shape. After-pains feel like (intense) menstrual cramps. You can take two 500 mg paracetamol tablets with intervals of 6 hours. You can also take this if you experience a lot of pain from the stitches.

- **Stitches**

It is possible that you received stitches after giving birth due to a rupture or cut (episiotomy). Hygiene, regular change of maternity bandages and rinsing the wound are important.

## Care for the baby

### Breastfeeding

- Wash your hands first.
- Make sure that your baby's mouth opens wide and that the lips are curled outwards, the cheeks should be round and not drawn in.
- We recommend feeding on demand, every hour or every two to three hours, including at night. When your child has had enough, he/she will naturally let go or fall asleep.
- Provide at least eight feeding moments per 24 hours, so one feeding every 3 hours. If your child does not wake up often enough on its own, it will have to be woken up earlier. Offer one breast until your child starts drinking less, then put him/her on the other side.
- If latching is not successful, no problem. Re-apply him/her when showing feeding signals (searching for a hand or smacking).

# Starting up at home without maternity care



- If the baby is restless after feeding, try to relatch or keep the baby with you for comfort.
- Breastfeeding can be sensitive but should not hurt. If you do have pain, it may be possible that your child has not latched properly. Unlatch your baby from your breast by breaking the vacuum with your little finger in the corner of your baby's mouth. Then, try to latch again.

## Formula feeding

- Wash your hands first.
- Prepare the formula according to the instructions on the packaging.
- On the first day, your baby should drink 10-20 cc per feeding, with a maximum of 8 times per 24 hours.
- Drop a few drops of milk on the inside of your wrist and feel whether the formula is not too warm.
- Make sure that the teat is always filled with milk so that your baby does not swallow too much air.
- When your baby is full or has finished the bottle, you can hold him or her upright against you so your baby can burp.
- It is okay if the baby does not want to be fed during the first 24 hours because he or she is nauseous or continues to sleep. Simply try again after 3 hours, using newly prepared milk.

## Nauseous

Your baby may feel a little nauseous due to the birth and may spit up some blood or mucus. Don't be alarmed when your child is gagging or spitting up. Turn your child onto his or her side or hold your child upright.

## Changing

Change your child before every feeding and write in the chart below whether your child has urinated or pooped. Show this schedule to the maternity nurse when she comes to you. You can also keep the diaper so that the maternity nurse can take a look at it. Your child's belly button may bleed a little. If this is more than 2 centimetres in diameter on skin or clothing, please contact your midwife.

## Temperature

- Take your baby's temperature when you get home. Babies often cool down during the ride home. The temperature should be between 36.5 and 37.5 °C. Hands and feet often feel cold, this is normal.
- In the chart you will find information about hot water bottles. Place the hot water bottle in a hot water bottle bag between two layers of blankets with the cap down. You should never place the hot water bottle directly against your child, there should be one hand's width space between the baby and the hot water bottle.
- Measure your child's temperature with a rectal thermometer every time you change the diaper.

# Starting up at home without maternity care



Low temperature (below 36.5 Celsius)	Temperature between 36.5-36.8 Celsius	High temperature (above 37.5 Celsius)
Skin to skin contact and cover the baby with a baby wrapper or baby blanket	Baby hat	Remove baby hat
Two hot water bottles in the bed	One hot water bottle	Remove one hot water bottle
Extra baby blanket		Remove baby blanket
Extra clothing		Remove (some) clothing
Baby hat		
Feeding		

*Important: Do not choose more than one of the above points at a time. Please check the temperature again one hour after you followed some steps.*

*Consult with your midwife if the temperature is still abnormal.*

## Save sleeping position

- Keep your baby in the room with you and place the baby on its back in the crib/bed.
- Do not let your baby sleep in your own bed.
- Do not place cuddly toys made of soft, stuffed fabric or plastic in the crib.
- Make the bed as short as possible, so that your child's feet are almost at the foot of the bed. Than he or she can't get his head under the blanket. Fold the sheet or blanket tightly around the sides and bottom of the mattress.
- Do not smoke in the house, smoking is dangerous for the baby and can cause sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

## Who you can call if you are at home and you are worried

If you have any questions or are concerned about your own health or about your child, you can always contact your own midwife.

You should **always** contact your own midwife if the following applies:

- If the blood loss is more than one full maternity pad per half hour or if you suddenly have a lot of blood loss or large blood clots.
- If you have a fever > 38.0 Celsius.
- If you cannot urinate.
- If you have persistent abdominal pain.
- If your child has a pale colour.
- If your child's temperature does not drop (at temp >37.5) or rise (at temp <36.5) an hour after following the above schedule.
- If your child makes moaning noises and *appears to be short of breath*.
- If you are concerned.

# Starting up at home without maternity care

Tips

The first hours at home with your baby.



To ask

If you have any questions, please ask your midwife or maternity nurse.  
To make sure that you won't forget anything, write your questions down in advance.

1. \_\_\_\_\_?
2. \_\_\_\_\_?
3. \_\_\_\_\_?

Time	Temperature	Urine	Stool	Feeding	Breast: left/right

We wish you a good night and a pleasant maternity period!

Primary care midwife and telephone number:  
\_\_\_\_\_