

# NOW WHAT?!

CREATING YOUR POSTNATAL PLAN PRENATALLY

GETTING YOUR LIFE READY  
FOR BABY & ASKING FOR HELP

## What happens when you don't?

THOSE TOUGH CONVERSATIONS

## We will help you have them!

*Find out the signs of PPD*

## Checklists included!

AND WHO DOESN'T LOVE THOSE?!





*Do what you feel in your heart to be right - for you'll be criticized anyway.  
- Eleanor Roosevelt*



We did the postpartum period terribly. In hindsight we know why, but when we were in the thick of it, we saw no other choice. Bianca had her daughter, Gray, in the middle of a heat wave in August in 2007. After a 52 hour natural labour and delivery she returned home from the hospital to discover that a group of her family was flying in from Vancouver to meet the new addition to the Sprague clan. Loving her space being clean and organized inside and out, Bianca immediately began to mow the lawn and weed the gardens in the hot August sun, pausing only briefly to change the ice pack in her underpants. Yes, seriously. She kept up this break neck pace with entertaining and maintaining her pre-baby schedule, including flying solo to Vancouver with her little one to introduce her to the rest of the family. She kept this pace until, well, she couldn't. Her body said no more and she ended up with terrible mastitis. Some of you may already know what this is, but for those of you that don't, it is a breast infection that feels like an awful flu coupled with a red, hot and painful infection site inside the breasts. It did the trick and slowed her down. Being the only one of her friends to have a baby, there was also social isolation that happened and very few of her friends knew how to support her - this led to an episode of postpartum depression. Bianca was growing her birth and parenting business at the time (yes, as if her plate could handle it) so she immersed herself in research and resources for families so none of her clients would feel such overwhelm and disappointment with the postnatal period. A few months later, Bianca met Natasha.

## Why is this important?

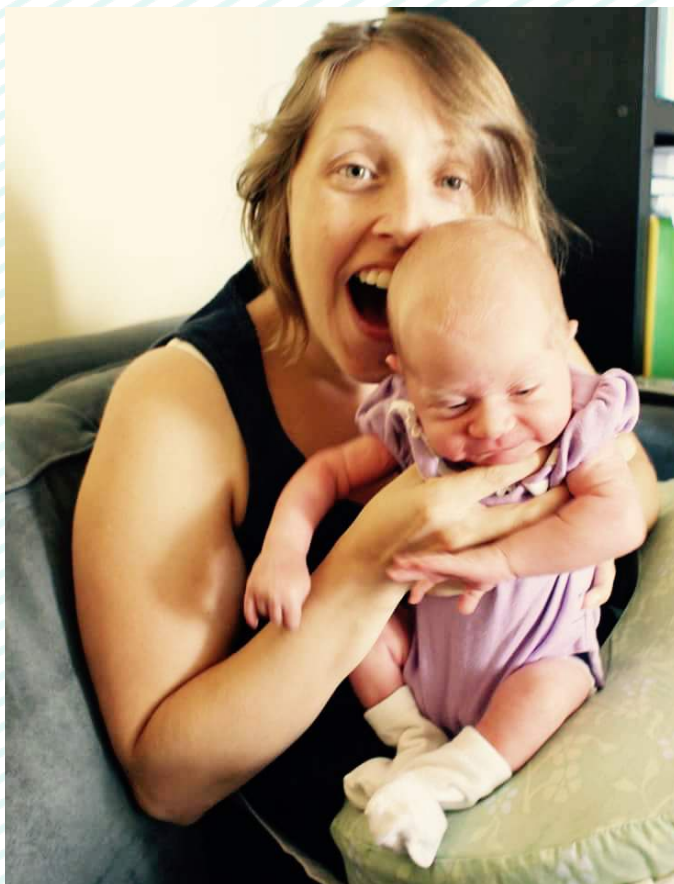


Bianca Sprague (above) & Natasha Marchand (below) with their babies in their early days postpartum. They are also the co-founders of bebo mia inc. and they want to make sure that no one ever does the postnatal period like they did. Ever. Seriously.

## Sharing our dirty little postpartum secrets

Natasha had a similar story after her long labour and delivery during August 2011. Rather than landscaping like Bianca did, Natasha found herself at Busker Fest on the hot Toronto streets with her family who had flown in from Halifax to meet Sadie. Also being an entrepreneur, there is no maternity leave, so Natasha was right back to work after a week or two. There was a major difference though between Bianca and Natasha - they had each other now. The two of them leaned on one another. Whoever had client appointments or classes to teach, the other had the girls. Natasha got better and better at asking for what she needed.

They both agree that setting up a plan in pregnancy is so critical. It lets friends and family know what you need. It tells them how to help. It makes sure that nothing falls through the cracks and most importantly, it ensures that parents have the best postnatal experience possible.



# LET'S MAKE A PLAN

CREATING YOUR POSTNATAL PLAN IN PREGNANCY CAN ONLY LEAD TO A MOST POSITIVE PARENTING EXPERIENCE

It has become common practice and \*ahem\* even a multi-million dollar industry to support families in creating a birth plan. By the way, if you need a free cheat sheet to help with a birth plan or birthing options, [click here!](#) A ton of excitement builds up as the expectant individual prepares their mind and body for the “big dance”. We spend hours and hours planning out the nursery and the baby moon and packing the hospital bag or renting a birth tub, and in all of this excitement and worry and planning and the whirlwind of emotions we have found that so many women overlook the importance of creating a postpartum plan. And what is a postpartum plan anyway? This is the plan put in place by the most important individual postnatally, the mama! \*gasp\* What about the baby?!

The baby is certainly an important part of this plan and it is during the initial postpartum period that everyone and their grandmothers are fawning over the baby and practically banging down your front door to “see the baby”. This postpartum period is also a time that we naïvely tell ourselves will be full of “free time” because you know, mat leave, right?! Wrong! Lots of veteran mamas can attest to barely having time to take a 5 minute shower on some days once all of the extended family support (if any) stops coming around.

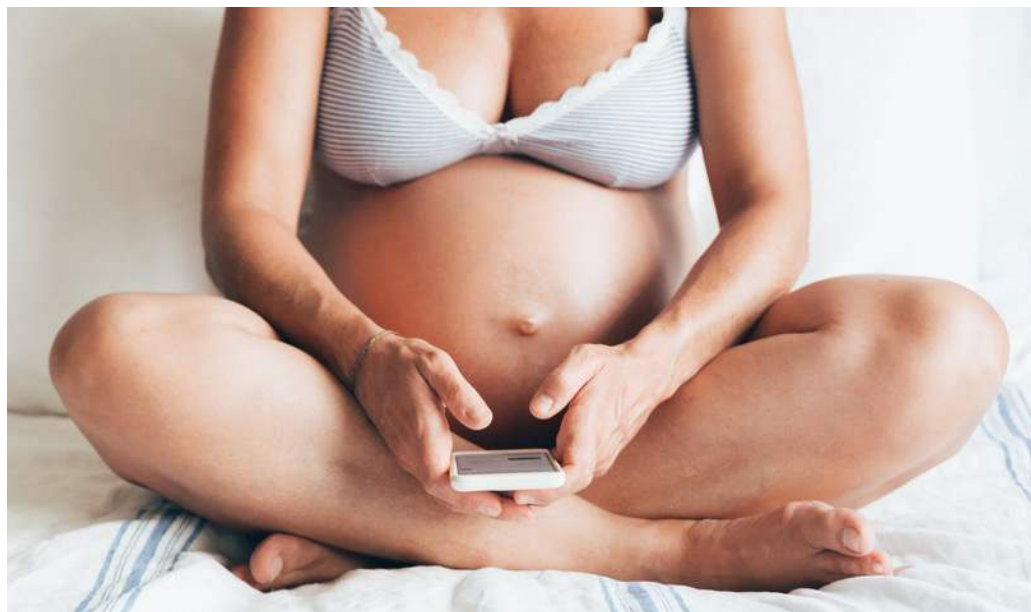
So, what systems can we put in place well before baby arrives? Glad you asked!

We will break this down into three categories:

*Building a tribe*

*Stocking up on goods*

*Setting boundaries*





## 1. Building a tribe

First and foremost please give yourself permission to solely focus on your needs and the baby's. Let's face it, you have a brand spanking new human, right in your own home! That's a super big deal! You guys will need lots and lots of time to get to know each other and you will both also need lots and lots of time to rest. Who is going to hold you accountable to this? If you have a partner you can discuss your need for them to be the "gatekeeper" and carve out very small windows of time each week where you can schedule visitors and then give yourself permission to cancel these visits too! You can also connect with individuals that share your values, humour, interests, and so on that you will meet at groups, classes and/or meet ups that you join. You can exchange information and set up some dates to have tea or lunch so that you can check in with one another.

## 2. Stocking up on goods

Good health and wellness will be fuelled by the goodness that you put into your body and the idea of going to the market or grocery store and then cooking may feel daunting once baby is home. Consider doing a "fishbowl" full of your favourite dishes at your baby shower so that your friends and family can take turns delivering meals that you love, right to your doorstep. If you like to keep busy and are able to take time off leading up to your due date then spending a few days cooking and freezing a bunch of meals might be the perfect solution for you. There are also a ton of good quality meal delivery services available to a lot of communities outside of major cities. You can pre-order some things or consider putting it on your baby shower wishlist. If you love food as much as we do, and boy do we love it, you can have some fun with packing your freezer full of foods that are comforting and healthful.

## 3. Setting boundaries

We left this third one as the final one because it's the most important and also the trickiest one. How do you tell relative "x" that their smoking habit is not something you want around you or the baby? When is it an appropriate time to let your mother-in-law know that you would prefer that she didn't move in with you after the baby is born? Is there a nice way to let people know that you don't want to hear their opinions on breastfeeding? These are all very tricky conversations to navigate and it becomes even trickier to hold space for differing opinions when our hormones are all over the place. Some ideas:

Write a letter to the smoker that is from the baby (eg. Dear \_\_\_\_\_, My lungs are so sensitive)

Share blogs, books, songs, quotes, etc that communicate your parenting values

Engage in open and honest dialogue with your partner around household and financial responsibilities. We often think that these conversations are not necessary and expectations should be inherently understood, and it doesn't work that way. Communication between you and your support network will set you all up for success.

Ok, so we've pulled no punches as we painted a picture of what the postpartum period is going to look like for mamas and, for the non-believers, we totally get it, that was us! We ask that you blindly trust us, at least for now, and think about what an ideal postpartum plan would like for you. You may not need everything on that list once the time comes and you will be even more grateful for the plan when that happens. Here is a breakdown of the plan elements in more detail so that you can get to it and put your plan in place!



# PLAN DETAILS:

## 1. Rules around lying in period/ babymoon:

This is the time where you want to get to know the baby, your new role & to heal from birth.

Set boundaries from the beginning - How long would you like with no visitors or limited guests?

Let people know (answering machine, Facebook, Instagram) what you need, set clear expectations!

"I love you very much but I need this time to figure out life as a mama" - outline what you need

## 2. How you would like your village to support you:

Teach people how to treat you - THEY WANT TO HELP

Write a letter to show them how you would like them to help! We have a sample for you coming up!

If you are babymooning, should they drop meals at the door?

When people do start to visit, how can they help? Limit number of visitors & set clear expectations for visitors. The new mom is not a host - if they want a drink they can help themselves. Create a list of chores to help with for visitors

You may be pumping or breastfeeding and that needs to be ok.

## 3. Task Division!

It is important that we explain to new mothers that caring for a newborn will be her only job at the beginning, and that's ok. It is important that we set REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS about what the postpartum period is like.

Don't get caught up with the idea that because now you're off work you can cook & clean because you will have more time.

You might also explain, especially if you or your family are perfectionists, that things will not be perfect for a while, and that is ok too.

Babies breastfeed every three hours (at best, from beginning of one feed to the next) and each feeding session can be 45 minutes. That alone adds up to 8 hours a day. Plus you still have to get the baby to sleep, change the baby, bath the baby, dress the baby - you also need to take a shower, eat and nap. There is little time for anything else.

Write out a list of what mother's responsibilities are currently and delegate them all out. Some examples: housework, budgeting, walking dog, folding, cooking, car maintenance etc. Next to the list of each tasks needs to be the name of the person who is now going to do it for the early weeks postpartum.

Don't forget, who's going to refill mama's nursing station snacks and who will keep her water bottle full.

Where is dinner coming from?!?!? Set up a meal train.

## 4. Relationships

Please, please make sure you focus on your relationship and not just focus on baby. You and your partner need to be strong in order to be the best parents you can be! Plan dates at home, sleep next to each other, hold hands, really listen to each other. These things seem simple now, and when you are tired and hormonal and grumpy as heck, they feel like chores!

## 5. List your friends/family you can call for support

Post it on the fridge and make sure you have their: name, phone number & times available.



## 6. List of professional support should issues arise

You will need easily accessible names and numbers of professional local resources such as: breastfeeding consultant, public health nurse, MotherRisk, Telehealth, local postpartum doula.

Also note any resources you have built up during pregnancy like your massage therapist, chiropractor or naturopath

Post a list of signs of postpartum depression (PPD). It is especially important for partners to know these and make sure they know who to call if these arise. We have a PPD cheat sheet for you coming up!

## 7. Places to go when they feel isolated

Make a list with directions/address for local: Early years centres, postnatal fitness (check out the [Baby & Me Fitness Directory](#)), library programs, names/numbers of people you met in prenatal classes, etc.

## 8. Short list of people you trust with baby

You want a few other people you trust to form an attachment with baby! Start slowly if you are nervous about this step! This will allow you to have an hour to yourself or for you and your partner. These may not be the same people that come by to help with laundry as listed above.

## 9. List of things that make you feel well - and others can support you in making sure you have this:

These things may be something like: a 20 min yoga DVD, bath, read, walk, putting on makeup, crafting, building something, or whatever makes you feel happy.

*Labour & Birth Cheat Sheet!*

[Click here!](#)





## POSTPARTUM PLAN SUMMARY LIST

- ### 03

**TASK DIVISION!**  
Set realistic goals about the first 4 months, baby-care takes all day.
- ### 04

**RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARTNER**  
This is going to require TLC! Build it into your day.
- ### 05

**LIST OF FAMILY & FRIENDS**  
Think of this as your lifeline list.
- ### 06

**LIST OF PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT JUST IN CASE**  
Lactation support to local clinics, make your emergency list.
- ### 07

**PLACES TO GO WHEN YOU FEEL ISOLATED**  
Know where to go for company - playgroups, meet ups and drop-ins.
- ### 08

**LET PEOPLE YOU TRUST ATTACH TO BABY**  
Support bonding with baby for those trusted few so they can help.
- ### 09

**LIST OF THINGS THAT MAKE YOU FEEL WELL**  
Baths, reading, putting on makeup, writing...what makes you feel well?

**01** **RULES FOR THE BABYMOON**  
State them clearly from the beginning.

**02** **HOW YOU WANT YOUR VILLAGE'S SUPPORT**  
Teach them how to take care of you - they want to help!



# SIGNS OF PPD

THESE SYMPTOMS MAY SHOW UP ANYTIME FROM BIRTH OR EVEN MONTHS AFTER. THESE SIGNS & SYMPTOMS CAN BE INTENSE & CAN INTERFERE WITH YOUR ABILITY TO CARE FOR YOUR BABY, YOURSELF OR WITH HOW YOU MANAGE YOUR DAILY TASKS.

- 
- Depressed mood or severe mood swings
  - Excessive crying
  - Difficulty bonding with your baby
  - Withdrawing from family and friends
  - Loss of appetite or eating much more than usual
  - Inability to sleep (insomnia) or sleeping too much
  - Overwhelming fatigue or loss of energy
  - Reduced interest and pleasure in activities you used to enjoy
  - Intense irritability and anger
  - Fear that you're not a good mother
  - Feelings of worthlessness, shame, guilt or inadequacy
  - Diminished ability to think clearly, concentrate or make decisions
  - Severe anxiety and panic attacks
  - Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby
  - Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide

A TEMPLATE FOR A LETTER FOR YOUR FRONT DOOR:

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Dear Guests -

Thank you for coming to visit us. Please come in and wash your hands...no sickies please!

We have had a few busy days, so please forgive the mess and we hope you understand if this visit needs to be short.

Help yourself to drinks and food in the fridge - we are not sure what we have left. If you notice I am all out of water and/or snacks I hope you will fill me up too!

I may have to disappear with the baby to nap for a while, there is a list of to-do's on the fridge if you want to help us out a little bit.

We have put a lot of thought into how we choose to care for our new baby, so please keep advice to yourself unless we ask.

I may need to feed my baby in front of you, if you are uncomfortable with this, I'm really sorry, but my baby must eat! She is a hungry little one!

Thank you for coming to visit and I appreciate your help and your support.



# READING LIST:

Click for links

[\*Mothering the New Mother\*](#) by Sally Placksin

[\*The Year After Childbirth\*](#) by Sheila Kitzinger

[\*The Baby Book\*](#) by Dr. Sears

[\*Breastfeeding made simple\*](#) by Nancy Mohrbacher

[\*The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding\*](#) by LLL

[\*Sweet Sleep\*](#) by LLL



## Pre & Post Natal Fitness Teacher Training >



**MORE INFO**

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We know how hard it is to leave your little one to return to your out-of-the-home job once you put your plan into place. We create programs so moms can stay home more with their little ones and still have a career!

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