

A woman with curly hair is shown from the chest up, holding a baby. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent pattern of leaves and branches. The text is centered over the image.

ATLAS *of* MOTHERHOOD

POSTPARTUM
SELF CARE

a mini guide

For Atlas of Motherhood by Leata-Mae D'Avoine



ATLAS OF MOTHERHOOD

The Atlas of Motherhood is a modern resource to help women thrive in their transition to motherhood, inspired by the best mother care and support practices from across the globe. The Atlas of Motherhood takes a fascinating look at what mother care means around the world and ways to improve a mother's well-being and health during pregnancy, birth, postpartum, and beyond by incorporating the best practices from different countries and cultures.

Through an inspiring and intimate collection of conversations with mothers across the world, sharing their experiences of motherhood, accompanied by practical advice, comprehensive guides, and online classes from experts across the globe (all mothers themselves), *The Atlas of Motherhood* focuses on the care of the mother so she can be the happiest and healthiest mother for her child.

Meet mothers and experts all around the world that share their experiences and unique perspectives of maternal care and learn how to incorporate these best practices into your own journey, no matter where you are located in the world. There is something to learn in each country explored.



LEATA-MAE D'AVOILE

Hi, I'm Leata-Mae (she/they)

I am a parent, full spectrum birth worker and holistic well being facilitator based in the UK.

While advocating for reproductive, racial & birth justice, my work is also focused on encouraging others to stay informed & empowered when it comes to their self care and self love.

This mini guide has been created with the birthing parent in mind. These tips serve as an introduction for you to begin to cultivate what kind of postpartum experience you desire. I hope that with the help of this guide you are able to find ways to center yourself and the care that you deserve.

For more information on me, my work and virtual services offered, check out leatamae.com



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NUTRITION

When it comes to food after birth, ask yourself the following; is it warming? is it nutritionally dense? is it easily digestible? and is it comforting? These are the top requirements to fulfill when it comes to your postpartum diet.

Warm and digestible food will support better circulation and the internal workings of your body as your organs shift back into place, as well as easing any of that common postpartum constipation. Eating things that bring you comfort is also important in making you feel good. Whether it be a dish your grandma used to make or your favourite meal that makes you dance, eat your happiness. Lastly and most importantly, foods that are packed with nutritional goodness will assist in your recovery and accelerate your healing. There are many things to make sure you include in your diet but the below is a good place to start.

IRON

It's important to replenish the iron you lose during birth and if you're breastfeeding, your iron stores get depleted as they assist in building up your baby's reserves for their proper development. Rather than supplements (unless directed to by your doctor) try and get most of your intake from iron rich meals which is easier on your digestion.

MEAL IDEAS

Spinach + Eggs
Tofu or Red meat tacos
Lentil Ragu
Pumpkin Seeds

VITAMIN D

Vitamin D deficiency has been linked to things like depression, low energy and bone problems. All of these symptoms can be common issues once giving birth and becoming a parent, so increasing your Vitamin D can give you that extra help you need.

MEAL IDEAS

Mushroom & Ricotta Omelette
Chickpea & Tomato Stew
Lamb Tagine
Fig + Yoghurt

B VITAMINS

B vitamins like B12, B6 folate and biotin are involved in many of the body's essential processes. From the formation of red blood cells and brain development to improving energy levels and the immune system, B Vitamins are critical in maintaining good health.

MEAL IDEAS

Citrus fruit smoothie
Spiced Veggie stuffed Avocado
Salmon stir fry
Peanut Butter energy balls

WEEKLY MEAL PLAN

Day 1

BREAKFAST
LUNCH
DINNER

Day 2

BREAKFAST
LUNCH
DINNER

Day 3

BREAKFAST
LUNCH
DINNER

Day 4

BREAKFAST
LUNCH
DINNER

Day 5

BREAKFAST
LUNCH
DINNER

Day 6

BREAKFAST
LUNCH
DINNER

Day 7

BREAKFAST
LUNCH
DINNER

BIRTH AFTERCARE

Vaginal Aftercare

TEARS

There are several places you could potentially tear during childbirth but the most common is the area between the vulva and anus, known as the perineum. A warm sitz bath or a witch hazel pad can help to relieve any pain, help fight infection and reduce swelling.

BLEEDING

All the extra blood and tissue you had during pregnancy is now looking to leave your body and this can sometimes feel like a heavy period. You do not want to insert anything like tampons or mooncups, so consider organic cotton or reusable pad options as well as period pants so you can free bleed.

PAIN

Your vaginal area will likely be tender and sore after birth and one thing that can aggravate that pain is peeing. Using a spray bottle filled with warm water, spritz yourself as you pee and this will help to take the sting out of your urine. Sitting on a pillow or donut shaped cushion can also help ease and discomfort.

Belly Birth Aftercare

TUMMY SUPPORT

Try to relieve anything that could put pressure on your stomach muscles. So that's no lifting anything heavier than your baby or strenuous exercise, and also holding a pillow against your tummy when you laugh, sneeze or cough to lessen the blow. Also try a belly band or belly binding to help your abdomen feel more supported.

SCAR CARE

Make sure you keep your wound clean and dry and once your scar has closed & healed, gentle massage with vitamin E oil can help to break down and settle the tissue. Also be mindful of your breathing, deep slow and gentle breaths will help to massage internal organs and the healing tissue.

PAIN

Multiple layers are cut through in surgery so there should be no surprise that there will be some pain experienced afterwards. Heat therapy can relieve some pain and tenderness at and around the incision site as well as wearing loose clothing. Over the counter painkillers that your doctor recommends will also assist in a little relief.

SUPPORTING YOUR MIND

Get Help

Adjusting to life after birth can come with challenges and it's important to know that you don't have to do everything yourself. Your self care is just as important a responsibility as taking care of your little one and family.

Ask for support when you need it. Arrange for friends to set up a meal train. Get someone to help with things you may need doing around the house. Organise childcare for your other children - asking for help can make the adjustment a little smoother allowing you to not feel so overwhelmed.

Be Gentle

On the days where it all seems a bit much, remind yourself that you are doing the best you can and that is enough.

Find ways to share any thoughts or feelings that are coming up for you during your journey. Maybe you can journal, talk to family, friends or a community of people who can hold space for you or who are also on a similar journey with you.

Being gentle with yourself means allowing yourself to feel all that you feel so that you can move into parenthood a little lighter without the heavy emotions weighing you down.

You Matter

After giving birth it's really easy to get so lost in the demands of parenthood, that you forget to take some time out just for you. This might sound unrealistic, but even just a few minutes a day can help you to reconnect with yourself. Honour any rituals or routines that make you feel at peace and allow you a moment to breathe.

Fuel yourself with self love and do things you enjoy that remind you that you are more than just a parent. You are a priority, because you can't pour from an empty cup.

SELF CARE BINGO

Ways to fill your cup

Connected with
someone about
something other
than the baby.

Went for a short
walk by myself.

Took a hot
relaxing bath
alone.

Gave myself a
compliment.

Did or watched
something that made
me laugh.

Nourished my
body with my
favourite meal.

Asked for
what I needed.

Took a nap.

Moved my
body joyfully.

Went to bed early.

Unplugged from
technology.

(Fill the blank)

SAY NICE THINGS TO YOURSELF!

*Affirmations to get you through the days, weeks,
months when you need that gentle reminder.*

"I honour my body"

"I am enough"

"I give myself grace"



"I deserve rest"

"My intuition is
information"

"I'm doing a great job"

"My feelings are valid"

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Postpartum Plan

A postpartum plan is an extension of your birth plan and can be used for those first few days, weeks and even months after birth. Think about the ways in which you can honour yourself and your body as you transition through to your postpartum experience. Below are some thought prompts to consider as you create the plan that's best for you.

What is your love language and how best can others and yourself honour it?

What does rest look like to you?

What are your favourite foods?

What would be your ideal day?

What support you can gather + for how long?

What are all the feeding options you could consider?

How much can you prep and have ready prior to birth?

How will you schedule in time for yourself if needed?

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Postpartum Plan

Will you be trying sleep routines + where will baby and you sleep?

Instead of a baby shower could you consider a postpartum shower?

Are you able to hire help? (house support, childcare, doula etc)

What are the local resources available?

If you have older children - can you schedule time with them, navigate any jealousy or distractions needed, find ways that they can be involved?

Can you give your partner roles and responsibilities?

What makes your body feel good?

Who do you feel best around?

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Postpartum Plan

What boundaries can you put in place to protect your wellbeing?

Do you want any visitors in those first days/weeks?

What would you most like from others?

What are the ways in which you feel seen?

What words, encouragement or affirmations do you like to hear?

How + when do you feel most safe?

What are your go to comfort measures?

How can you show yourself tenderness?

Are there any traditions or practices you'd like to honour?

POSTPARTUM PLAN

Template

Once a day I need:

Once a week I need:

I'd like to:

I feel best when:

My boundaries are:

Whats important to me:

Please don't:

Please could you:

My responsibilities are:

Your responsibilities are:

POSTPARTUM PLAN

Add additional desires here:



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