

# What to Expect After Your Delivery at Northwestern Medicine Prentice Women's Hospital





This handout from the Postpartum Nursing team will give you information about what to expect after your delivery.

# Be prepared before you go to the hospital

## For your baby:

Have your baby’s car seat base safely installed in the car before delivery. You can get help at a car seat inspection station near you. Find one at [nhtsa.gov/vehicle-safety/car-seats-and-booster-seats#installation-help-inspection](https://nhtsa.gov/vehicle-safety/car-seats-and-booster-seats#installation-help-inspection).

Choose a pediatrician for your baby’s care.

Know your baby’s feeding plan. Whether you are breastfeeding, bottle feeding or both, we want your baby to be set up for success going home.

Make sure you have the supplies you need ready at home. The hospital does not give you extra supplies.

## For you:

Have medications you may need ready for you at home. You can buy these over-the-counter medications at most drug stores. You may need the following medications as directed by your physician:

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil®) for pain as needed
- Docusate (Colace®) stool softener
- Prenatal vitamins if you are breastfeeding
- Simethicone (Gas-X®) for gas discomfort
- Benzocaine spray for perineal discomfort
- Witch hazel pads (Tucks® pads) for perineal discomfort

If your physician orders any prescription medications (such as antibiotics), let them know the pharmacy you use.

Your care team may ask you to check your blood pressure at home. They will give you more information about taking your blood pressure if you need to do so. If you have a blood pressure machine, bring it to the hospital. We will check to make sure it is working OK.



# About your hospital stay

## What to bring

We suggest that you bring these items with you to the hospital room:

- Pillows
- Extra blankets
- Pumping/nursing bra
- Breastfeeding pillow if you have one
- Slippers/sandals
- Clothes for yourself and your baby to wear home
- Extended cable phone charger
- Infant car seat

## Visiting policy

You can have 1 support person with you at all times. This person must be over the age of 18.

After delivery, your support person must wear an ID band with your baby’s name. The support person cannot share this band with anyone else. Only the banded support person can spend the night in your room.



In the Postpartum Unit, you can have visitors from 8 am to 8 pm. During these hours, you can only have 2 visitors at a time in addition to the banded support person and the baby’s siblings. We cannot make exceptions to this.

Visiting rules differ in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and the Labor and Delivery Unit. Visiting hours are subject to change.

## Dining

You will get 3 meals and 2 snacks each day from the on-call dining center. Your support person can buy meals for themselves for \$12 per meal. To order your choices, call from the phone in your room. The dining center is open from 6 am to 9 pm daily.

In addition, several restaurants in the hospital are open 24 hours a day. Dunkin’ Donuts is in Northwestern Medicine Prentice Women’s Hospital. The following restaurants are in Feinberg Pavilion:

- Subway
- Panera Bread
- Starbucks

Your support person can bring food to your room. You can order food from outside of the hospital to be delivered, but your support person will have to meet the food delivery person on the 1st floor of Prentice Women’s Hospital.

You can get water and ice in unit nourishment rooms. Everyone on the unit can access them. The unit does not have public refrigerators.

# Feeding your baby

We want to support you in whatever feeding plan you and your family choose. This information will help you decide what is best for you and your baby.

## Breastfeeding

Your Nursing staff is trained to help you with breastfeeding. We encourage you to ask them for help and practice rooming-in to learn your baby’s hunger cues.

If your nurse or your physician feels you need more help with breastfeeding, they will enter an order for a lactation consultation. Lactation consultants are health professionals who specialize in breastfeeding (chest feeding).

- They mostly work with people who have infant feeding issues and concerns.
- They are at the hospital during the day.
- They usually see a baby after the first 24 hours of life due to the baby’s sleepiness in the 1st day of life.

Many insurance companies cover the cost of lactation consultations. Insurance may also cover the cost of a breast pump. Check with your insurance company before you deliver to help you be more prepared.

If you need to pump breast milk after delivery while you are in the hospital, we recommend using the hospital-grade pump we provide for you. All staff nurses are trained on the proper use of the hospital breast pump. They cannot help you operate or teach you about your personal breast pump.

A pumping bra holds the breast pump flanges in place while you are pumping. This keeps your hands free. Bring a pumping bra if you:

- Plan to only pump
- Are delivering prematurely
- May be separated from your baby

## Formula feeding

If you plan to feed your baby formula, the hospital can give you formula for your baby during your stay.

If you want to use your own formula, you will need approval from the pediatrician. If you use your own formula, the Nursing staff cannot help you prepare the formula, give you feeding supplies or help you feed your baby.

## Hand expression

Colostrum is the first form of breast milk (pre-milk). It has many nutrients and can help build your baby’s immune system. It is very thick.

Expressing breast milk by hand (hand expression) is one of the best ways to collect colostrum. Although the amount of colostrum you make may seem small, it is enough to feed your baby at first. If your baby is having a hard time latching on to your breast, you can express colostrum into your baby’s mouth, a medicine cup or a spoon. You can then feed your baby colostrum by putting it in a spoon or syringe.

Hand expression is a temporary way to get breast milk. It cannot be the final feeding plan for your baby. Some babies may need more milk at first. Pumping and formula feeding can help until lactation is well established.

To learn more about hand expression, we suggest reading “Feeding Your Newborn: The First 24 Hours.” You can find this at [nm.org/patients-and-visitors/patient-education/pregnancy-and-newborn-care](https://www.nm.org/patients-and-visitors/patient-education/pregnancy-and-newborn-care).

You can use this QR code to watch a video about hand expression:



# Care for you and your baby in the hospital

Your Obstetrics and Pediatrics care teams will see you and your baby each day.

Your care team will complete the newborn baby care bundle at 24 hours of life. This includes:

- Bath
- Weight
- Pulse oximetry test for oxygen level
- Newborn metabolic blood screening test
- Bilirubin blood test to check for jaundice

You can also expect the following:

The newborn hearing screening team from Pediatrix® will check your baby’s hearing.

Your baby will get their 1st round of the hepatitis B vaccine.

A representative from the Perinatal Data Center will either call into your room or visit you in person to complete documents your baby must have (such as a birth certificate).

If you want a circumcision for your baby, an obstetrician will do it. If the obstetrician cannot do a circumcision for a medical reason, they will refer you to a pediatric urologist.

The hospital photographer from Bella Baby will call you with information about scheduling a photo session with your baby if you choose to do so.



There are nurseries on each postpartum floor if you would like to use them. The care team urges you to keep your baby in your room (rooming in) as much as possible, especially if you plan to breastfeed exclusively. If you feel you need to have your baby moved to the nursery, the care team will help you. Let your nurse know if you do or do not want your baby to use a pacifier.

## Special circumstances

If your baby is in the NICU at Prentice Women’s Hospital or Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago you and your banded support person can visit your baby at any time, day or night. Please check in with your postpartum nurse before you visit so they can make sure your medications and assessments are up to date.

After visiting hours end at 8pm, you will need a pass from the Postpartum Unit secretary to get on and off the elevators. If you are breastfeeding and want to bring expressed breast milk to your baby, we can store it for you in the NICU. You or your banded support person can bring it to the NICU any time. The care team will show you how to label the milk.

If you have an infection or virus and are on isolation precautions, the care team may need to restrict your access to visitors and other patients to ensure everyone’s safety. This may include:

- No visitors
- No access to the nursery
- No Bella Baby photography

Giving birth can impact the way your bladder works. Your nurse will check how much urine you pass after delivery. Some people cannot urinate on their own after delivery and need a urinary catheter to drain the urine. Most often, the care team will remove the catheter before discharge. However, some people may need to keep it for a short time at home.

Some people have high blood pressure. They might need IV (into the vein) magnesium to help keep them from having problems. If you need this medication, you will need to stay in bed for 24 hours after delivery. Your nurse will take your vital signs and check on you every hour while you are getting the medication.

Some people may get a fever during labor or soon after delivery. This can mean there is an infection. They and their baby may need antibiotics.

The care team may monitor your baby’s blood glucose (blood sugar) level for up to 24 hours after delivery to make sure it is at the right level. Some babies at risk for low blood glucose include:

- Premature babies
- Babies who are small or large for their gestational age
- Babies born to mothers with diabetes

Jaundice is a liver condition that happens when there is too much bilirubin in the blood. Every baby has their bilirubin level checked at 24 hours of life and on the morning of discharge. Some babies may need their bilirubin level checked sooner or more often.

Every baby has a hearing screening. If the baby does not pass the hearing screening, they will have a 2nd screening. If the baby does not pass the 2nd screening, the care team will schedule the baby for a 3rd screening after discharge.



# Getting ready to go home

This information will help you get ready to go home with your baby.

For your baby:

- Bring your baby’s car seat carrier to the unit either when you are admitted or the night before discharge.
- Make a follow-up appointment with your baby’s pediatrician for 1 to 2 days after discharge. Your baby cannot go home without having this appointment scheduled.



For you:

- Schedule your follow-up appointment with your obstetrician. This visit is usually 6 weeks after delivery. However, some may need a follow-up appointment sooner. Ask your obstetrician what they recommend for you.
- You can rent a hospital-grade breast pump from Lori’s Gift Shop (312.472.4400) on the 1st floor of Prentice Women’s Hospital. It is open Monday through Friday from 10 am to 4 pm. The gift shop carries the Ameda Platinum® and the Medela Symphony® electric breast pumps. You will have to buy the pump parts.
- If you need forms filled out, such as a leave of absence form for work, ask your obstetrician about this when they see you at the hospital. The Nursing staff cannot sign these forms.
- If you need to submit an Illinois Department of Human Services Women, Infant and Children (WIC) Program form, tell your postpartum nurse. Your nurse will complete the medical information and bloodwork. They will give you the completed form before you are discharged.
- If you have any concerns about yourself, your baby or resources for going home, ask your nurse to connect you with a social worker at the hospital.



## To learn more

You will get a booklet, “Understanding Postpartum Care,” that covers care for you and your baby. You will also get a handout, “Help at Home,” to make sure you have what you need for going home.

You can find more useful handouts about caring for yourself and your baby on the Northwestern Medicine Patient Education site. Go to:

[nm.org/patients-and-visitors/patient-education/pregnancy-and-newborn-care](https://nm.org/patients-and-visitors/patient-education/pregnancy-and-newborn-care) or scan the QR code:





# Timeline for your hospital stay



**Delivery (vaginal or cesarean [C-section])**  
Prentice Women's Hospital, 8th floor



**After delivery**  
Transfer to the Postpartum Unit  
Prentice Women's Hospital, 11th, 12th or 13th floor



**Day 0 to 1**  
Visit from obstetrician and pediatrician

Newborn baby care bundle at 24 hours of life:

- Bath
- Pulse oximetry test
- Metabolic blood screening test
- Weight
- Jaundice test



**Day 2 to discharge for normal vaginal delivery**  
(People who had a C-section usually stay 3 to 4 days.)

- Obstetrician and pediatrician visit and place discharge orders
- Newborn baby weight and bilirubin blood level done
- Circumcision (if not yet completed)
- Discharge education and "Help at Home" information
- Car seat in room
- Discharge time is 11 am to 1 pm

**If you have any questions or concerns while you are in the hospital, talk with your care team.**  
Call your obstetrician or your baby's pediatrician for any questions or concerns after you are discharged.



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