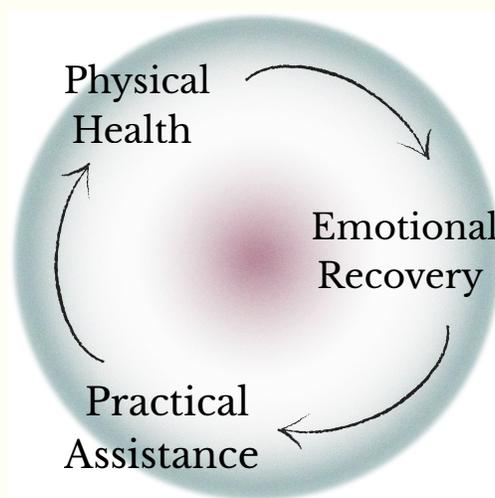


What is Self-Care in the Perinatal Period?

Self-care in the perinatal period includes intentional actions that support physical, emotional, and mental well-being throughout pregnancy and the postpartum period. Recovery is not limited to a single visit after birth but is a continuous process that evolves over time. Physical healing may involve managing discomfort, monitoring surgical or perineal wounds, rebuilding strength, and gradually returning to normal activities as the body allows. Emotional recovery is equally important and includes recognizing mood changes, addressing anxiety or symptoms of postpartum depression, and developing healthy strategies to cope with stress and adjustment. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG, 2018) emphasizes that postpartum care should be comprehensive and ongoing, with early follow-up and continued communication between women and their healthcare providers to support both maternal and infant health.



What Self-Care Really Includes

Research shows that postpartum self-care is multidimensional and essential to overall recovery. It involves supporting both physical healing and emotional well-being while ensuring access to practical and social support during this transition (Lambermon et al., 2020). Recognizing self-care as a necessary part of recovery helps normalize the need for support and reinforces that caring for yourself is an important part of caring for your baby.

Quick Reflection: (Check off what feels most difficult right now)

- Getting enough rest
- Managing emotions
- Finding trustworthy information
- Asking for help
- Making decisions confidently

It's completely normal for some of these areas to feel challenging; many new and expecting parents face similar struggles. Take a moment to notice which items you checked and consider small steps you could take this week to support yourself. For example, asking a friend or family member for help with a task, setting aside five minutes for deep breathing or journaling, or reaching out to a trusted healthcare provider for guidance can make a meaningful difference. Remember, caring for yourself is an important part of caring for your baby, and small, consistent actions can help you feel more confident and supported during this transition (Lambermon et al., 2020; ACOG, 2018).

My Next Steps This Week

Think about the areas that felt most challenging above and pick one or two small actions to try this week. Writing them down can help you follow through and make progress.

Challenge	Small Step I Can Take This Week	Who Can Support Me?
Getting enough rest		
Managing emotions		
Finding trustworthy information		
Asking for help		
Making decisions confidently		

References: Lambermon et al., 2020; ACOG, 2018

