



## Maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health

# WHO recommendations on postnatal care of the mother and newborn

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## Overview

The postnatal period is a critical phase in the lives of mothers and newborn babies. Most maternal and infant deaths occur during this time. Yet, this is the most neglected period for the provision of quality care. WHO guidelines on postnatal care have been recently updated based on all available evidence. The guidelines focus on postnatal care of mothers and newborns in resource-limited settings in low- and middle-income countries.

The guidelines address timing, number and place of postnatal contacts, and content of postnatal care for all mothers and babies during the six weeks after birth. The primary audience for these guidelines is health professionals who are responsible for providing postnatal care to women and newborns, primarily in areas where resources are limited. The guidelines are also expected to be used by policy-makers and managers of maternal and child health programmes, health facilities, and teaching institutions to set up and maintain maternity and newborn care services.

The information in these guidelines is expected to be included in job aids and tools for both pre- and in-service training of health professionals to improve their knowledge, skills and performance in postnatal care. These recommendations will be regularly updated as more evidence is collated and analysed on a continuous basis, with major reviews and updates at least every five years. The next major update will be considered in 2018 under the oversight of the WHO

Guidelines Review Committee.

## **Related documents**

[WHO technical consultation on postpartum and postnatal care](#)  
October 2008

[More documents on postpartum and postnatal care](#)