

PRINTABLE

5-5-5 Rule for Postpartum: A Guideline *for Partners*

Supporting your partner after they've given birth is crucial. Be there to provide emotional support, help with household tasks, and ensure they have time for self-care as they navigate the challenges and joys of the postpartum period.

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Overview

The 5-5-5 guideline for postpartum care is a helpful tool to remind and encourage new parents to prioritize rest and recovery during the early weeks after childbirth. This guideline will help you plan and track as you support your partner.

In general, the 5-5-5 guideline suggests spending the first five days in bed, the next five days on the bed, and the final five days near the bed. This gradual approach allows for increased mobility and activity as the postpartum period progresses, promoting physical and emotional well-being. However, it's important to note that postpartum care should be personalized to individual needs, and consulting with a healthcare provider for guidance is essential.

Tracking Sheet

Use the following table to track your daily progress in following the 5-5-5 guideline.

✓	Day	Location	Notes
	1	In bed	
	2	In bed	
	3	In bed	
	4	In bed	
	5	In bed	
	6	On bed	
	7	On bed	
	8	On bed	
	9	On bed	
	10	On bed	
	11	Near bed	
	12	Near bed	
	13	Near bed	
	14	Near bed	
	15	Near bed	

Days 1-5: In Bed

For the first five days after childbirth, your partner should spend most of their time in bed. List five essentials you think you should keep near your bed to make this time more comfortable and convenient for your partner.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Words of Encouragement for Mama

"You are an amazing mother."

"I'm so proud of you for bringing our beautiful baby into this world."

"You've shown incredible strength and resilience."

Notice and Take Action

While it's important for partners to communicate openly with each other and ask what assistance is needed, there are situations, particularly in the postpartum period, where taking **proactive** action can be especially valuable.

Here are some daily action items for you to take:

- Fill up her water bottle (make sure she has it near her)
- Bring her snacks (see 'Postpartum Snacks Ideas' on page 7)
- Reset the spaces (nursery, bedroom, bathroom)
- Hold the baby so mom can address daily hygiene
- Prepare / order nourishing meals
- Correspond with family, friends, pediatrician, and maternal care provider

Questions to Ask Your Partner

- "How are you feeling physically?"
- "What's on your mind right now?"

Days 6-10: On Bed

For the next five days, your partner can gradually increase mobility by spending more time on the bed. Depending on their level of recovery, list five possible activities or exercises they may want to do while on the bed to help with recovery.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Words of Encouragement for Mama

"I admire your courage and the love and care you've been giving to our newborn."

"I see all that you're doing to take care of you and our baby. I appreciate you."

"You're doing an incredible job."

Notice and Take Action

Here are some action items for you to take this week:

- Wash the sheets (crib and bed)
- Refresh towels and toiletries
- Mom and babies laundry
- Empty the diaper pail
- Get groceries (See page 8 for example grocery list)

Days 11-15: Near Bed

During the final five days of this guideline, your partner may be able to start spending more time out of bed. List five gentle activities they might like to do while continuing to rest near the bed.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Words of Encouragement for Mama

"Don't forget to take care of yourself too. I'm here to support you in every way."

"I love seeing our family grow, and I'm grateful for all the love and care you're giving to our baby."

"Seeing your radiant smile as you bond with our baby fills my heart with joy. You light up our world."

Notice and Take Action

Here are some action items for you to take this week:

- Check to see if partner needs more recovery products
- Restock diaper and wipe supply
- Deep clean: bedroom, bathroom, kitchen

Postpartum Snack Ideas

Nutritious postpartum snacks are essential for new mothers as they provide energy and support recovery. Here's a list of 10 healthy postpartum snacks:

1. **Greek Yogurt with Berries:** Greek yogurt is rich in protein and probiotics, while berries add antioxidants and fiber.
2. **Trail Mix:** Create your own mix with nuts, seeds, dried fruits, and a touch of dark chocolate for a satisfying and energy-boosting snack.
3. **Hummus with Baby Carrots:** Hummus is a great source of protein and healthy fats, and baby carrots provide vitamins and crunch.
4. **Nut Butter and Banana:** Spread almond or peanut butter on banana slices for a quick and filling snack.
5. **Hard-Boiled Eggs:** Eggs are packed with protein and nutrients. Have a few hard-boiled eggs ready in the fridge for easy snacking.
6. **Cottage Cheese with Pineapple:** Cottage cheese is high in protein and pairs well with fresh pineapple chunks for a sweet and savory option.
7. **Oatmeal with Almonds and Honey:** A bowl of oatmeal topped with sliced almonds and a drizzle of honey provides complex carbohydrates and healthy fats.
8. **Avocado Toast:** Whole-grain toast with mashed avocado, a sprinkle of salt, and a dash of red pepper flakes is a satisfying and nutrient-rich choice.
9. **Vegetable Sticks with Guacamole:** Dip cucumber, bell pepper, and celery sticks into guacamole for a nutritious and tasty snack.
10. **Whole-Grain Crackers with Cheese:** Whole-grain crackers paired with a variety of cheeses provide a balanced combination of carbs, protein, and calcium.

Remember that hydration is also crucial during the postpartum period, so be sure to drink plenty of water throughout the day. Additionally, it's essential to consult with a healthcare provider or a registered dietitian to ensure that your postpartum diet meets your specific nutritional needs, especially if you are breastfeeding.

Grocery List

Creating a comprehensive grocery list for postpartum nourishing snacks and meals can help ensure you have everything you need to support your partner's recovery and provide adequate nutrition. Here's a list of items to consider:

<p>Protein Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Chicken breast or thighs <input type="checkbox"/> Lean ground beef or turkey <input type="checkbox"/> Salmon or other fatty fish <input type="checkbox"/> Eggs <input type="checkbox"/> Tofu or tempeh (for vegetarians/vegans) <input type="checkbox"/> Greek yogurt <input type="checkbox"/> Cottage cheese <p>Fruits and Vegetables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries) <input type="checkbox"/> Apples <input type="checkbox"/> Bananas <input type="checkbox"/> Oranges or citrus fruits <input type="checkbox"/> Leafy greens (spinach, kale, arugula) <input type="checkbox"/> Carrots <input type="checkbox"/> Bell peppers <input type="checkbox"/> Cucumbers <input type="checkbox"/> Avocado <input type="checkbox"/> Broccoli <input type="checkbox"/> Sweet potatoes <p>Whole Grains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Oats (rolled or steel-cut) <input type="checkbox"/> Whole-grain bread or wraps <input type="checkbox"/> Quinoa <input type="checkbox"/> Brown rice <input type="checkbox"/> Whole-grain pasta <input type="checkbox"/> Whole-grain crackers 	<p>Healthy Fats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Avocado <input type="checkbox"/> Nuts (almonds, walnuts, cashews) <input type="checkbox"/> Seeds (chia seeds, flax seeds) <input type="checkbox"/> Olive oil <input type="checkbox"/> Coconut oil <p>Dairy and Dairy Alternatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Milk (if not lactose intolerant) <input type="checkbox"/> Cheese (in moderation) <input type="checkbox"/> Plant-based milk (almond, soy, oat) <input type="checkbox"/> Plant-based yogurt (if preferred) <p>Snack Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Hummus <input type="checkbox"/> Nut butter (peanut, almond, or cashew) <input type="checkbox"/> Dried fruits (apricots, raisins, dates) <input type="checkbox"/> Dark chocolate (in moderation) <input type="checkbox"/> Trail mix ingredients (nuts, seeds, dried fruits, chocolate) <input type="checkbox"/> Rice cakes or whole-grain crackers <input type="checkbox"/> Popcorn kernels (for homemade popcorn) <p>Frozen Foods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Frozen fruits (for smoothies) <input type="checkbox"/> Frozen vegetables (for quick meals) <input type="checkbox"/> Frozen whole-grain waffles or pancakes 	<p>Canned and Shelf-Stable Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Canned beans (black beans, chickpeas, lentils) <input type="checkbox"/> Canned tuna or salmon (for quick salads or sandwiches) <input type="checkbox"/> Broth or stock (for soups) <input type="checkbox"/> Canned tomatoes (for pasta sauces) <input type="checkbox"/> Nutritional yeast (for added flavor) <input type="checkbox"/> Pasta sauce <p>Beverages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Plenty of water <input type="checkbox"/> Herbal teas (chamomile, peppermint) <input type="checkbox"/> Electrolyte drinks (for hydration) <p>Miscellaneous:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Meal prep containers <input type="checkbox"/> Freezer bags (for storing prepped meals) <input type="checkbox"/> Baking supplies (if you plan to bake) <input type="checkbox"/> Baby-friendly foods (if needed) <p>Special Requests from Mama:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
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This list provides a foundation for postpartum nourishment, but remember to personalize it based on your dietary preferences, restrictions, and any specific recommendations from your healthcare provider. Meal planning and preparation can be helpful, so consider making some postpartum-friendly meals in advance to ease the transition into this new phase of life.

Older Children

Supporting a postpartum mama when you have other children can be a juggling act, but with some planning and thoughtful gestures, you can make the transition smoother. Here are some quick tips to help:

1. **Plan Playdates or Activities:** Arrange playdates or activities for older children to keep them engaged and entertained, allowing the new mom some rest.
2. **Meal Prep:** Prepare easy and nutritious meals in advance that can be quickly reheated or assembled, reducing the cooking load.
3. **Enlist Help:** If possible, ask family members or friends to assist with childcare or household chores.
4. **Involve Older Siblings:** Encourage older children to help with age-appropriate tasks, like fetching diapers or selecting baby clothes.
5. **Create a Daily Schedule:** Establish a routine to provide structure for older children, which can ease anxiety during this transition.
6. **Set Realistic Expectations:** Understand that there may be moments of chaos, and it's okay if things aren't perfect. Emphasize flexibility and patience.
7. **Have Supplies Handy:** Keep essentials, such as diapers, wipes, and snacks, easily accessible to minimize disruptions.
8. **Designate Special Time:** Set aside one-on-one time with each older child to make them feel valued and secure.
9. **Offer Emotional Support:** Let older children express their feelings and concerns about the new sibling and reassure them of your love.
10. **Self-Care for Mom:** Encourage the new mom to prioritize self-care, even if it's just a short break, to recharge and reduce stress.
11. **Accept Help:** Don't hesitate to accept offers of help from friends or family members, whether it's a home-cooked meal or babysitting.
12. **Communicate with Your Partner:** Maintain open communication with your partner about responsibilities and share the load.
13. **Bedtime Routine:** Ensure a consistent bedtime routine for older children to promote good sleep habits.
14. **Stay Organized:** Use calendars, apps, or to-do lists to keep track of appointments, school activities, and other commitments.
15. **Practice Gratitude:** Express appreciation to older children for their patience and understanding during this period.
16. **Consider Professional Support:** If needed, seek the assistance of a counselor or therapist to help older children cope with the changes.

Remember that each family's situation is unique, so adapt these tips to fit your specific circumstances and the needs of your children. The key is to create a supportive and loving environment during this transitional time.

Reflection

After completing the 5-5-5 guideline, take a moment to reflect.

- Did you find this guideline helpful in supporting your partner during her recovery?
- Were there any challenges or adjustments you needed to make along the way?
- How do you plan to continue taking care of your partner, yourself, and your baby beyond these initial weeks?

Remember that this guideline is a general recommendation and may not be suitable for everyone. Always consult with your healthcare provider for personalized postpartum care guidance and recommendations.