

# Cultural Considerations for Postpartum Care

LEARN TO WORK WITH PATIENTS' CUSTOMS AND FIND  
NEW WAYS TO GIVE QUALITY CARE

**Cultural practices and religious beliefs are important to recovery and wellbeing after having a baby.** Many of these have the following in common:



	<p><b>Postpartum customs</b></p> <p>A period of 30–40 days that can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for the mother</li> <li>• Rest and home confinement</li> <li>• Special diet</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Rest and home confinement</b></p> <p>There are benefits associated with postpartum customs, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baby bonding</li> <li>• Breastfeeding</li> <li>• Protection from the elements and exposure to illnesses</li> <li>• Positive impact on postpartum depression</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Best practices</b></p> <p>For greater success with patients sticking to a postpartum care plan, consider doing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the mother what customs she will observe. Include the answers in the medical record. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Must stay in the house for 40 days.</li> <li>– Tightly wrap the head and/or stomach.</li> <li>– Need to eat or avoid certain foods.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Share the reasons why follow-up postpartum care is important.</li> <li>• Stress the need for a visit on or between 7 and 84 days (1–12 weeks) after delivery.</li> </ul> <p>Use the patient's answers to develop the postpartum care plan. Then schedule the visit.</p>

Most cultures observe special postpartum customs that the mother is expected to complete.

Send an email with any questions to [Cultural.and.Linguistic.Services@healthnet.com](mailto:Cultural.and.Linguistic.Services@healthnet.com).

(continued)

## Other considerations

Get more training for your practice about cultural customs and preferences.

- Review the References section.
- Understand the cultural stigma of postpartum depression. Increase awareness and identification of behavioral health signs and symptoms.
- Provide information on available behavioral health resources.

## References

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- [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/7633342](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/7633342).
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