

Janine Smith

Checklist for you with a new baby during your 4th trimester

1	Try not to have any expectations of your baby or of you It helps to go with the flow, to get to know your baby and his/her needs. Every baby is different and it might feel like chaos during those early weeks.
2	What do you need? Support, reassurance, help to be comfortable, food, drinks, rest and information.
3	Can you sit in a comfortable position? Try to use cushions and pillows to get you as comfortable as possible for resting and feeding.
4	Are you drinking plenty of water? It helps to drink water regularly, especially if you are breastfeeding and it will make going to the loo more comfortable.
5	Do you need to eat? You might feel ravenous, eat well and give your body the fuel it needs.
6	Are you going to the loo regularly? Initially, it can be uncomfortable to go to the loo. Try to relax, use your breathing if you are sore and drink some water.
7	Are you using your breathing to stay calm? If you are sore or feeling overwhelmed, focus on your breathing to manage any discomfort and to get rid of any tension.
8	Are you resting? Even if you feel great, try not to do too much in these early days and weeks. Listen to your body and rest when you need to.
9	Get help and reassurance if you need it As a new mums you may need looking after so you can focus on getting to know your baby and so you can heal. If you are unsure of anything, don't hesitate to ask your midwife/health visitor/GP. You can also call the maternity unit.
10	Do you need support with feeding? Whether you are breastfeeding, bottle-feeding or combination feeding, if it feels overwhelming or confusing, it helps to talk it through, to have a better understanding and a clearer idea of what you want to do. If you are breastfeeding and it is painful, if there are issues with your baby's latch or weight-gain and he seems very unsettled, speak to a breastfeeding specialist and your baby may need to be assessed for a tongue tie.

Some babies are settled and they can feed well during these early weeks, while other babies are more unsettled and there may be issues with feeding, weight-gain and unsettledness.

Even when life with a new baby is straight-forward, it is a time of adjustment for you and your baby. Some babies need reassurance as they get used to the world outside the womb and as they learn to feed and you are getting to know your baby, their needs and their behaviour.

All of this takes time and it can't be rushed, which is why the 4th trimester can be seen as a period of acclimatization with a slower daily pace.

Based on a range of evidence, experience and maternity policies:

- Royal College of Midwives
- NICE Guidelines
- Dr Sara Wickham
- Dr Rachel Reed
- NHS
- La Leche League

About Janine

I have worked with expectant and new parents for over 20 years and I also attend births as a doula. Every parent I work with is different, as is every labour I have been part of, including my own. As the person who is pregnant and in labour, it's important you are at the centre of your care, which is why I encourage you to personalise your birth & baby preparation, to think about what matters to you. This means you can be honest, ask questions and plan around more realistic expectations.

Effective birth & baby preparation means planning beyond your ideal birth, so you are better able to manage any challenges and changes.

Ways to work with me:

- Join the Birth & Baby Community
- Arrange for 1:1 sessions
- Read my antenatal course and birth guides

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Notes & Questions