



Caring for

# Mothers and Newborns



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## NOTICE TO THE READER

Though the guidelines contained in this text are based on consultations with health care professionals, they should not be considered absolute recommendations. The instructor and readers should follow employer, local, state, and federal guidelines concerning health care practices. These guidelines change, and it is the reader's responsibility to be aware of these changes and of the policies and procedures of her or his health care facility/agency.

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Caring for mothers and newborns in the home is a rapidly growing area of the home care industry. The average length of stay in the hospital after delivery for mothers with new babies is 24 to 36 hours. Needless to say, the mother and the baby who are discharged this early require additional care and support. When no complications occur to the baby during the pregnancy or delivery, it is not necessary for a skilled nurse to assist them in the home after discharge from the hospital. Therefore, this has become an important specialty area for home health aides.

Aides who care for mothers and their newborns in the home must have specialized skills and must feel comfortable in this situation. They should also have the ability to be a supportive role model to the parents, who may be under a lot of stress.

Many people believe that caring for babies comes "naturally." This is not the case in reality. It requires special training to properly care for a mother after delivery and a baby who is only one or two days old. This course will help train aides and assistants to care for the needs of the mother and the newborn, as well as understand some necessary procedures and management skills.

You may wish to begin by encouraging the class to discuss why this specialty is growing rapidly in today's home care arena. The class should be encouraged to share personal experiences in newborn care.

We have designed this in-service as an extension of minimal skills taught to aides and nursing assistants in basic training. The focus here is on both the newborn and the new mother. Usually the assistant is

expected to care for both in the home situation because caring for one naturally involves caring for the other. You should stress that patient teaching is a nursing function. However, when the nurse is not included in the care, the aide will become both teacher and role model for new parents.

This is an awesome responsibility for which your aides should be well prepared. New mothers tend to ask home health aides more questions than they do of the nurses, because aides spend more time in the home and develop a more intimate relationship with mother and baby. Education in this important area can help, but aides should also know when to direct questions and concerns to the supervising nurse.

This in-service can be divided into three separate in-services as follows:

- Pre-partum caregiving skills
- Post-partum caregiving skills
- Observation and documentation skills

Please note that limited permission is granted to photocopy the handouts for use at the site originally purchasing this in-service. Photocopying other parts of this in-service, including the lesson plan, is expressly prohibited. To use handouts, photocopy the number needed for your group. Consider using different colors of paper to organize the different handouts or to make some stand out.

Convert transparency masters to acetates for use with an overhead projector. If overhead projection is not convenient for your presentation area, you may wish to copy the information from the transparency masters onto a chalkboard or flip chart.

**Happy Teaching!**

# Introduction and Assessment

**Estimated Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Tools:** Handout Intro-1 Assessment  
Handout Intro-2 Assessment Answer Key  
Handout Intro-3 Note Taking Worksheet  
Handout Intro-4 Key Terms  
Handout Intro-5 Crossword Puzzle  
Transparency Intro-1 Your Role

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**Learning Activity:** **Self Assessment**

**Distribute Handout Intro-1 Assessment** Ask the students to evaluate their knowledge of newborn care. This assessment may be given now as well as at the end of the in-service to determine how much participants have learned.

**Distribute Handout Intro-2 Assessment Answer Key** Give the answers to the assessment only if appropriate to your lesson plan.

**Distribute Handout Intro-3 Note Taking Worksheet** Ask participants to take notes during lecture to organize and remember the information for later use.

**Distribute Handout Intro-4 Key Terms** Use this handout to define terms throughout the in-service, as needed.

**Distribute Handout Intro-5 Crossword Puzzle** Allow participants enough time to finish this crossword puzzle, which deals with the role of the caregiver.

**Learning Activity :    Lecture**

**Display  
Transparency  
Intro-1  
Your Role**

The answers to the crossword puzzle included on this transparency. See if participants can pick them out. (For a complete answer key, see pg. 109.) Discuss the important roles of the aide when caring for new mothers and their babies:

- Provide care for the newborn
- Provide care for the new mother
- Provide skillful observation
- Provide safe environment
- Provide opportunity for mother and newborn to rest and recover
- Provide help with household chores
- Provide positive example for parents

# Assessment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Complete each sentence with the correct word or phrase.

1. Most new mothers stay in the hospital \_\_\_\_\_ days.
2. A normal newborn's pulse rate is \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Umbilical cords fall off in \_\_\_\_\_ days.
4. Premature babies are more common for mothers with exposure to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
5. A perineal incision made during labor is called an \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Abdominal delivery by surgical incision is called \_\_\_\_\_  
delivery.
7. Breast-feeding is done every \_\_\_\_\_ hours for the first month.
8. Newborns sleep \_\_\_\_\_ hours a day the first few months.
9. One safety guideline when caring for newborns is \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Observation and reporting of stools includes \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
11. One procedure for aides to learn when caring for a newborn is \_\_\_\_\_.
12. Bonding is the beginning of the relationship that develops between \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

## Assessment Answer Key

1. One to two
2. 120 - 160 beats a minute
3. Seven to ten
4. Drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, hazardous materials
5. episiotomy
6. caesarean
7. Two to three
8. 18 to 20
9. Any of the safety guidelines given in Learning Objective 11
10. Color, frequency, diarrhea, and constipation
11. Any of the procedures given in Learning Objective 9
12. The newborn and parents