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## Overview

This standard is about assessing the health and well-being of women who have recently given birth. It covers all women who require postnatal care, including those who, for whatever reason, may not be caring for a newborn baby.

This standard does not cover assessment of the health and well-being of babies, although the interdependent relationship between the health and well-being of the mother and her baby/ies will be an important aspect of her postnatal assessment. A caring and compassionate approach should be adopted in line with current healthcare guidance. Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies.

## Assess the health and wellbeing of women during the postnatal period

**Performance criteria**

You must be able to:

1. establish an open and supportive relationship with the woman and key people involved in her care as agreed with her
2. identify and respect the privacy, confidentiality and wishes of those involved
3. maintain confidentiality and share information in accordance with your organisation's information governance requirements
4. support the woman and key people to communicate their views and preferences, and encourage them to seek clarification of any procedures, information, and advice relevant to them
5. explain the assessment process to the woman and key people and obtain the necessary agreement and consent
6. establish any specific requirements to achieve an effective assessment
7. determine whether the services of a chaperone are required
8. use discretion, sensitivity and respect throughout the assessment
9. encourage and support the woman to review and evaluate her birth experience and to share with you any concerns she may have about the processes and outcomes
10. encourage the woman to express her own needs and to discuss them with you
11. select assessment methods that are safe for the woman, appropriate to her needs, and take account of all available information and other relevant factors
12. apply appropriate health and safety measures and standard precautions for infection prevention and control
13. undertake the assessment and interpret the assessment results correctly
14. encourage key people to give appropriate support to the woman during the assessment
15. evaluate all information from the assessment to identify potential outcomes
16. recognise when further specialist assessment or support is required, and take the necessary action
17. produce records and reports that are clear, comprehensive, and accurate, and maintain the security and confidentiality of information

## Assess the health and wellbeing of women during the postnatal period

**Knowledge and understanding**

You need to know and understand:

1. legal, organisational and policy requirements relevant to your role and the activities being carried out
2. the nature, extent and boundaries of your work role and its relationship to others in the organisation
3. the roles of other health and social care practitioners and how they relate between and across agencies
4. the legal requirements and good practice guidelines on consent, and consent for children, young people and vulnerable adults
5. how to recognise and respond to the signs of injury, abuse or neglect and your responsibility in relation to raising concerns with the appropriate person or agency
6. local systems, procedures and protocols for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults
7. how to work in partnership with women to enable them to make informed choices in the context of their own lives
8. how to recognise when women are not able to exercise their rights to make informed choices and the actions to take in response to this
9. the importance of applying appropriate health and safety measures and standard precautions for infection prevention and control
10. the principle of information governance and the implications for your practice
11. how to communicate effectively with individuals to meet the needs of a socio-economic, culturally diverse population
12. the importance of focusing on the woman as an individual and the focus of care
13. how to respect the diversity and values of individuals
14. the best available evidence based practice and its role in improving services
15. the principles of clinical risk management and how to apply these to your work
16. the physiological, psychological and emotional changes that occur in women following childbirth and how to recognise these
17. the actions to take in response to concerns about the health and well-being of women and babies
18. the health conditions that may affect women during the postnatal period in your area of practice
19. the importance of early identification and management of a new mother's health problems
20. the additional needs of women who have:

## Assess the health and wellbeing of women during the postnatal period

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- 20.1 complications arising before, during or after birth, including those associated with abdominal or instrumental delivery
- 20.2 maternal physical ill health
- 20.3 psychological ill health
- 20.4 multiple births
- 20.5 premature or sick babies and those with congenital abnormalities
- 20.6 bereavement arising from pregnancy
- 20.7 previously experienced infertility
- 21. the interdependent relationship of the health and well-being of the mother and her baby/ies
- 22. the health benefits of breastfeeding and how to promote these
- 23. how to support the woman and her chosen feeding method
- 24. common feeding problems and how to manage these appropriately
- 25. the principles underpinning use of medication and the effects of medications on the overall health and well-being of mothers and their babies
- 26. how to seek advice on conditions and drugs that impact on women's postnatal care
- 27. how the needs of women during the postnatal period may affect others
- 28. the positive and negative impact of social relationships and environment on the health and well-being of women following childbirth
- 29. the factors that increase the risk of significant harm to newborn babies
- 30. the importance of offering, and having available, the services of a chaperone
- 31. the importance of identifying and gathering relevant information to inform the assessment
- 32. where this information is held and how to access it, including information held by other practitioners and agencies
- 33. the environment in which assessment takes place and how to address any limitations that may impact on the assessment
- 34. the equipment, materials and personal protective measures which will be necessary for the assessment
- 35. how to record your initial observations and use these to inform the assessment process
- 36. how to ensure that the woman and key people understand the assessment process and related interventions
- 37. the relevant guidance for postnatal assessment and care
- 38. the importance of encouraging the woman to reflect on her birth experience and identify any concerns arising from her experience and/or the outcomes
- 39. how to encourage and support the woman to express her own needs and the reasons for doing this
- 40. the assessment methods which are available for assessing the health and

Assess the health and wellbeing of women during the postnatal period

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well-being of women following childbirth and evidence of their effectiveness

41. the potential impact of assessments on the woman and key people

42. how to respect privacy and dignity during assessment

43. the importance of being aware of your own competence and scope of practice and when to refer to others for specialist assessment or support

44. how to keep records in accordance with organisational policies and procedures

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### External Links

This standard links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004):  
Dimension: HWB2 Assessment and care planning to meet health and wellbeing needs

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