

AWHONN Compendium of Postpartum Care

THIRD EDITION



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PROMOTING THE HEALTH OF
WOMEN AND NEWBORNS



AWHONN Compendium of Postpartum Care

Third Edition

Editors:

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This Compendium was developed by AWHONN as an informational resource for nursing practice. The Compendium does not define a standard of care, nor is it intended to dictate an exclusive course of management. It presents general methods and techniques of practice that AWHONN believes to be currently and widely viewed as acceptable, based on current research and recognized authorities. Proper care of individual patients may depend on many individual factors to be considered in clinical practice, as well as professional judgment in the techniques described herein. Variations and innovations that are consistent with law and that demonstrably improve the quality of patient care should be encouraged. AWHONN believes the drug classifications and product selection set forth in this text are in accordance with current recommendations and practice at the time of publication. However, in view of ongoing research, changes in government regulations, and the constant flow of information relating to drug therapy and drug reactions, the reader is urged to check information available in other published sources for each drug for potential changes in indications, dosages, warnings, and precautions. This is particularly important when a recommended agent is a new product or drug or an infrequently employed drug. In addition, appropriate medication use may depend on unique factors such as individuals' health status, other medication use, and other factors that the professional must consider in clinical practice.

The information presented here is not designed to define standards of practice for employment, licensure, discipline, legal, or other purposes.

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The *AWHONN Compendium of Postpartum Care* (3rd Edition) (*Compendium*), is a comprehensive reference book targeted primarily to meet the needs of postpartum and mother-baby care nurses. This third edition was developed and updated by a team of AWHONN member experts who are nationally and internationally recognized for their significant contributions in maternal, low-risk, high-risk, and neonatal intensive care nursing. The editors, contributors and reviewers were selected for their expertise as clinicians, academicians, and researchers whose work is focused on improving the health and well-being of women, newborns, and their families. AWHONN gratefully acknowledges their dedication and diligence to ensure that the *Compendium* remains an essential evidence-based nursing resource.

Ensuring uniformity in content and professional guidance across all of AWHONN's education and practice resources is a fundamental principle of our work. As such, AWHONN has incorporated relevant content consistent with current literature and practice recommendations from a variety of sources, and from key AWHONN publications. In particular, content for this *Compendium* was adapted in part, from AWHONN's *Perinatal Nursing*, (4th Edition), and from relevant AWHONN evidence-based clinical practice guidelines. We acknowledge and are grateful for the expertise and work of the editors, contributors, and reviewers for those publications.

AWHONN honors the memory of Ms. Mary Ellen Boisvert, MSN, RN, CLC, CEE, whose review of this book represents only a small view of her untiring dedication and service to AWHONN. Mary Ellen's passion for her work, for life-long learning and professional growth, and for her unflinching commitment to AWHONN's mission, members, and her colleagues will be greatly missed.

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Preface

The *AWHONN Compendium of Postpartum Care* (3rd Edition) (*Compendium*), provides essential information for nurses caring for women, infants, and families in the hospital, birthing center, out-patient, and home settings. This revised reference book provides evidence-based information and guidelines for postpartum care, addressing the physical, developmental, emotional, and psychosocial needs of mothers, newborns and families from birth through the first postpartum visit. This third edition *Compendium* is reformatted by topic area for ease of access by the reader and includes the following chapters:

- Chapter 1: Assessment and Care of the Postpartum Woman
- Chapter 2: Assessment and Care of the Newborn
- Chapter 3: Infant Feeding
- Chapter 4: Maternal and Infant Discharge Planning, Health Teaching, and Early Homecare
- Chapter 5: Postpartum Mood and Anxiety Disorders

Most women experience normal healthy pregnancies, therefore, much of postpartum nursing care and discharge preparation focuses on meeting mothers' fundamental physical and psychosocial needs. However, maternal morbidity and mortality has emerged as a significant health care crisis in the United States. Each year, more than 700 women die from pregnancy-related causes, and the majority of these deaths occur during the postpartum period. The *Compendium* third edition includes expanded content on postpartum complications and highlights AWHONN's POST-BIRTH Warning Signs parent education.

Newborn care content includes updated evidence-based information for normal newborn care and discharge preparation, and a section focused on assessment and care of the late-preterm infant. A dedicated infant feeding chapter provides comprehensive, best practice information targeted to breastfeeding protection, promotion, and support. It also includes updated guidance on formula preparation, use, and storage for mothers who cannot, or make informed decisions not to breastfeed their newborns.

Postpartum mood and anxiety disorders present a significant threat to both maternal and infant health. Sadly, in extreme cases, these disorders can result in the death of the mother and her infant or her other children. The third edition features updated research and practice recommendations for the spectrum of postpartum mood and anxiety disorders, and includes a series of case examples that helps to bring the mother's view of these disorders into clear focus.

Teaching mothers how to care for themselves and their infants at home is a key nursing role in promoting continuity of care. Nurses caring for postpartum women help to ensure that these women connect with primary care providers, out-patient services, and community resources. Hospital-based nurses should be aware of relevant community resources, and nurses practicing in the community should be aware of best practices for continuing postpartum care and education when the mother and infant are discharged.

Each updated chapter includes a relevant case study and a resource list for further exploration by postpartum and mother-baby nurses, or to share with mothers during discharge preparation. Please visit AWHONN's *Healthy Mom and Baby* website to access a wide variety of patient education resources at <https://www.health4mom.org/>

As the Editors of this new edition of the *AWHONN Compendium of Postpartum Care*, our goal was to provide a comprehensive, user-friendly resource that has great value for all nurses who provide care for women during the postpartum period. We hope we have accomplished this goal for our readers.

Patricia D. Suplee, PhD, RNC-OB
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AWHONN Compendium of Postpartum Care

THIRD EDITION



The **AWHONN Compendium of Postpartum Care** provides essential information for nurses caring for women, infants, and families in the hospital, birthing center, ambulatory care, or home settings. This revised reference book provides essential evidence-based information and guidelines for postpartum care, and addresses the physical, emotional, and psychosocial needs of mothers, newborns and families from birth through the first postpartum visit.

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