So I've done this once before, and while I don't expect to have the same exact experience, I have a better guess of what to expect than I did last time.

I wanted to sit down and share what I'm doing to prep for the PP period with my second babe since I'm older and wiser now.

With Theo I thought postpartum prep was about making padsicles, putting together a breastfeeding station, making freezer meals, and getting ahead for work. But as I went through that postpartum phase I quickly realized it's so much more about the mental aspect of postpartum that is just hard to prepare for when you've never been through it before.

But seeing as I won't be a first-time mom heading into this I wanted to try and share some guidance with those of you who are. And I'm not trying to scare you or say being a new mom isn't wonderful but it can be a hard slap to the face.

> I'm breaking my postpartum prep into physical health and then mental health. I hope this can help you prepare for postpartum in a more mindful way.

> > Victoria

HOW I PREPPED THE SECOND TIME

PHYSICAL HEALTH

POSTPARTUM HEALING Tucks (witch hazel pads) Advil (OTC pain medication) Colace (stool softener) Pads (maternity, regular + liners) Sitz bath (or just sitting in tub)

BREASTFEEDING/MILK SUPPLY Nursing friendly tops/bras Easy one-hand snacks/water Haakaa Hot shower/warm compress Nipple cream

LACK OF SLEEP/COMFORT

Loose pants Bathrobe Supportive Leggings Sound machine/sleep mask Let yourself nap Go to bed early

MEAL PLANNING/PREP

Easy meals on hand Let people bring you food Have a list of favorite takeout Make sure you're eating

WHAT HOSPITAL GIVES YOU

Witch hazel pads Numbing perineum spray Heavy-duty postpartum pads Peri bottle

SHOPPING/TO-DO LIST

HOW I PREPPED THE SECOND TIME

MENTAL HEALTH

- HORMONE FLUCTUATION

Know that your hormones are going to be all over the place after giving birth. Baby blues are normal. It's not always fun or what you envisioned having a sweet little newborn. But the blues do pass, and it gets easier.

Be on the lookout for anything beyond normal baby blues. Talk to your partner and those closest to you to make sure they're on the lookout as well. Because usually, it's going to be someone else who notices you're struggling with something more.

Postpartum depression is sadly very normal, but nothing to be ashamed of! Don't suffer through it alone. Reach out for help.

ADJUSTING TO NEW NORMAL

Adjusting to being a new mom is a shock to the system.

It was really hard for me at first (and still is at times!). I wondered if I had made a mistake, was I really meant to be a mom, was this really what I wanted with my life? It's totally normal to have all of those thoughts. To go from the freedom of just having to worry about yourself to now being responsible 24/7 for a new, very time-consuming baby is hard. I really struggled with my new identity for a long time.

And this time I'm like holy cow, I'm going to have two kids, be back to the newborn phase, no sleep, and no time to myself again. But I know it's all a phase that will pass. That I'll get my feet back under me and find my new normal with two kids. I'm ready for the shock to my system this time.

HOW I PREPPED THE SECOND TIME

MENTAL HEALTH

- ASKING FOR HELP/SUPPORT

Yes, you're this child's mom, but you didn't make them on your own. Ask your partner for help. I'm the worst when it comes to thinking I can just do it all myself. And if you do it all yourself they don't know how to help or what to do. Pass that baby off, ask them to be in charge of dinner, cleaning, the laundry, groceries, you name it for those first two weeks (and beyond).

Don't forget about those in your life beyond your partner. Your friends, siblings, parents. I promise you they're aching to help in any way they can. When they come over to see you and the baby say "Hey can you run this laundry through that's piled in front of the machine? Or can you put these dishes that are piled up in the sink in the dishwasher and start a load? Or hey can you hold the baby so I can shower and brush my teeth?"

Being a new mom is so isolating. Even with constant visitors, you can end up feeling alone and frankly forgotten about because all of the attention is on the baby. And you're like oh don't mind me over here bleeding through this maxi pad, stitched up, leaking milk, achy soft, and squishy.

- WHO WILL YOU ASK FOR HELP + HOW?