

Amsterdam Parent Project



Building the Village

Getting postpartum support in the Netherlands



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01

Dutch systems



Postpartum baby care

Wellness care at the Consultatiebureau

- The Consultatiebureau (CB) is responsible for **required vaccines and tracking your baby's physical growth and developmental milestones** from 0-4 years, as part of the broader Ouder-Kind Team (OKT, Parent-Child Team).
- Neighborhood sites staffed by pediatric nurses, with appointments conducted by the site's pediatrician.
- Frequent visits in the first year and open office walk-ins (for weighing and/or consult) often available, at no cost.

***The Consultatiebureau hosts an “Ouderchat” hotline**, where you can access chat support during business hours for baby and family care. You can chat in English or Dutch about developmental or non-serious medical concerns. (It's especially useful when traveling abroad!)*

- You can also find **anthroposophic consultatiebureaus** for alternative care. These CBs integrate standard government-mandated health checks with the holistic principles of anthroposophic medicine, emphasizing natural development, rhythm, and individual care.



Postpartum baby care

Life-threatening emergencies: Call 112

Business-hours care

- Your GP is responsible for situations that require medical attention and non-required vaccines for your baby. **Your baby is registered at your doctor free of charge** under one of the parents' insurance plans.

After-hours urgent care

- **Huisartsenposten**: For **urgent but not life-threatening conditions after hours**. You must first call this free hotline for advice on whether your baby's condition is serious enough to visit the hospital.

+31 (0)88 00 30 600 or via GP

- **Hospital**: If you've been cleared by the huisartsenpost, bring your baby to care at the indicated hospital; they will already have your information on hand from your huisartsenposten call. Emergency room care is covered by insurance and at no cost to you.



Postpartum baby care

Specialized care free with insurance

- **Children's physical therapy (kinderfysio)**: If you notice that your baby is **delayed or irregular in motor milestones** (rolling, sitting, crawling, walking), or has an irregular head shape/posture, a pediatric physical therapist can help. It's also worth trying if your baby has problems with latching. A consult and subsequent treatment are often free of charge with basic insurance.
- **Tongue ties**: If your baby is having **feeding issues**, a Lactation Consultant, your midwife, or the Consultatiebureau can check whether your baby has a tongue tie: a condition that restricts the tongue's range of motion and makes latching difficult and/or painful. Ties can be released at specialized clinics (*tongriemkliniek*) or by a trained midwife or a pediatric dentist. They will ask you some questions to establish if the baby needs the procedure. In most cases, the procedure is fully covered by insurance.



Postpartum parent care

Post-birth care

Physical health: For birthing-related care, like tearing recovery and breastfeeding problems

- **Midwife: First 6 weeks**
 - Cannot prescribe medication
 - Referrals to the GP/hospital for medication or specialized physical care (e.g. antibiotics for mastitis) as well as mental health care
- **Doctor (GP): After 6 weeks**
 - Referrals to specialists/hospital for specialized physical care as well as mental health care

Specialized postpartum care

- **Pelvic floor specialists:** After 3 months, a pelvic floor therapist can help with separated abdomen (diastastis recti), incontinence, and other pelvic conditions. Up to 3 consults may be covered by insurance.
- **Lactation consultants (LC/IBCLC):** For breastfeeding concerns. Usually not covered by insurance, but sometimes you can exchange your kraamzorg hours for a consult with LC. It's good to ask about it already before birth, as not all kraamzorg services offer it.



Postpartum parent care

Primary mental healthcare

Reach out first to your GP to talk about your mental health concerns. They can direct you to the appropriate first line (*eerstelij*n) resources:

- **At your GP:** Usually there's **support with short waiting times at your doctor's office through a mental health practitioner** (POH-GGZ, *Praktijkondersteuner Huisartsenpraktijk-Geestelijke GezondheidsZorg*). The POH-GGZ can offer screening and immediate, short-term support for issues like "baby blues," stress, and adjustment difficulties.
 - No referral required
 - Care is covered by insurance and deductible-free
- **Basic therapy:** The GP can refer you to generalist psychological care (*Basis GGZ*) designed to address common mental health issues: for postpartum, conditions like depression, anxiety, or birth trauma.
 - GP referral required
 - Care is covered by insurance, but with a deductible



Postpartum parent care

Specialized mental healthcare

- **Second line** (*tweede lijn*): For conditions that are more complex and/or require medication, specialized care (S-GGZ, *Specialistische GGZ*) is available.
 - GP and/or therapist referral required
 - Longer wait times, especially for care in English
 - Care is covered by insurance, but with a deductible
- **POP teams**: Many hospitals have multidisciplinary POP (Psychiatry, Obstetrics, and Pediatrics) teams — also called *POP-poli* — providing specialized mental healthcare for women with complex, severe, or high-risk conditions.
 - Referral from GP or midwife required
 - They are affiliated with **mother-baby psychiatric units, where you can be hospitalized without separation from your baby.**
 - Care is covered by insurance, but with a deductible

In case of a crisis:
Suicide line: Call 0800-0113 for free



Dutch system care advocacy

If you need it, seek a second opinion

- If the advice you're receiving from the Consultatiebureau or GP doesn't feel right, **you have space to learn about other options**. Other GPs or accredited postpartum professionals like lactation consultants, doulas, and coaches can direct you to evidence-based resources so you can form an opinion/ plan of action in partnership with your family care team.

Family care is deeply cultural

- What is standard practice here may not be advisable in your home country — for example, on the topics of postpartum activity, safe sleep, feeding, and multilingualism. **Consult evidence-based resources to learn more about what works best for your family**, whether that's aligned with the Dutch system or elsewhere.

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02

Crafting support



Social support

In-person support

- **Playgroups (Spelinloop)**: Free weekly playgroups hosted at neighborhood centers, no registration required. Parents with babies from newborn up to 2.5 (sometimes 4) years old welcome, though some have special 0-1 groups for early postpartum families.
- **Local family organizations** like Amsterdam Parent Project, Robbeburg International Playgroup, Monti's World, and WOW Family Center host regular English-language meetups and events for parents with (new and grown) babies.

Online peer support

- **Local online groups** on e.g. WhatsApp give easy access to support with newborn care, pumping, neighborhood family tips, and more. Please take care of your mental health when using these resources; many local online groups are very large with a lot of notifications, and/or could be experientially triggering.

Not all advice you receive from peers may be evidence-based or appropriate for your situation. Conduct your own research to ensure that you're following safe practices for your family.



Exercise: Filling support gaps

As new parents, where do you find support for date nights, work trips, or even a simple break? Here are 6 common postpartum scenarios in which you may need support from family, friends, and systems around you.

Do you have existing people/systems in your life today that could help in each of these scenarios? If not, where could you find help?

Scenario #1:
Date night

Scenario #2:
Partner trip / solo parenting

Scenario #3:
Solo self-care

Scenario #4:
Daycare closed

Scenario #5:
Sick parent requiring rest

Scenario #6:
Family/friend emergency

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03

Resources



Resources

Structural support:

- Hola Nanny: Find childcare (even last minute) for nights, events, fixed days, or even vacations. Specialized newborn care (kraamzorg training) available.
- Parentally and Amsterdam Pregnancy, Birth, and Postpartum Directory: Open, free, public directories for postpartum services and providers in Amsterdam
- Postpartum companion by Hello Doula: Vetted practitioner directory (with services discounts) and Amsterdam-specific resources, created by doulas

Social support and things to do:

- Communities & Resources for Amsterdam Parents: This is the intake form for the WhatsApp parent social groups (designed to protect privacy). You can select the types of groups you want to join and then you'll be sent the group join links.
- APP newsletter: Twice-monthly roundup of events, programs, and expert advice for parents of babies and toddlers in Amsterdam. Also as a Community Calendar!