

# HEALTHY BEGINNINGS

## A CIRCLE OF SUPPORT

We often underestimate the power of support from family, friends and healthcare professionals. Research has shown that early, regular care including support from friends and family leads to a more relaxed birth experience and a healthier baby. Having a support system can also lessen the stresses of pregnancy and parenting.

### Four Types of Support

#### Practical Support

As your pregnancy advances, your body experiences many changes which may include tiredness, nausea or vomiting, or difficulty sleeping. Once your baby arrives, caring for a newborn and yourself at the same time is a big adjustment.

You may need hands on help with the daily realities of pregnancy and parenting such as assistance with transportation and household tasks. Family, friends, neighbours, places of worship, other parents in your circle or a cleaning service are examples of who can provide this type of support.

#### PUBLIC HEALTH

1-877-464-9675  
TTY 1-866-512-6228  
[york.ca/prenatal](http://york.ca/prenatal)

#### Emotional Support

Positive emotional support during pregnancy and in preparation for parenting might come in the form of an adult friendship, existing relationships, mental health professionals or groups. Qualities for this type of support are availability, willingness to listen, sharing of ideas and being non-judgemental.

#### Informational Support

Pregnancy and parenting are learning processes and receiving quality information is critical. Reliable information on pregnancy and parenting can come from prenatal classes, parenting groups, breastfeeding clinics, healthcare professionals

and trusted websites such as [omama.com](http://omama.com) and [york.ca](http://york.ca)

Advice from community agencies and support groups is often helpful. Other pregnant women or parents can also provide information and support from their experience.

#### Healing Support

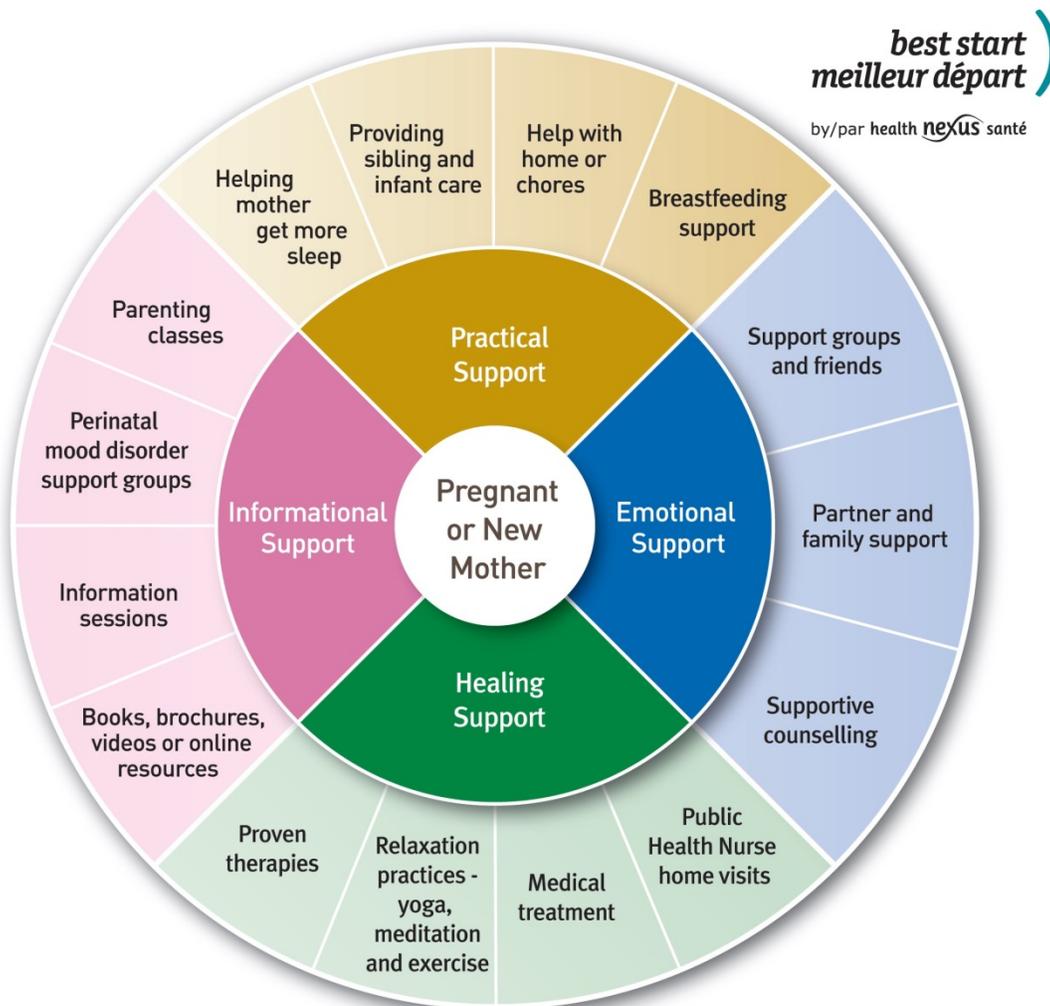
Opportunities to strengthen your body and mind are important during pregnancy and early parenting. Making time for small acts of self-care throughout the day will keep you more mentally balanced and energized. Physical activity, relaxation, and finding ways to reduce stress are helpful during this time.

## Make a Plan

Adjusting to pregnancy or life with a new baby takes time. Plan ahead and make a list of your supports to help with the adjustment.

Use the four different forms of support as a starting point. Nurture yourself. Ask for and accept help when you need it. Asking for help and having good support in place can:

- Increase your confidence
- Reduce your stress level
- Allow you to make informed decisions
- Increase the chance of having a healthy pregnancy
- Help your ability to provide for the needs of your baby
- Leave you with more time and energy to enjoy your pregnancy and your baby
- Assist in planning by using shared experiences and wisdom



## Perinatal Circle of Support

*Adapted with permission by the Best Start learning program.*