

Key notes on: Postpartum care in ICU/HDU

- All women need postpartum care after a pregnancy ends (abortion, stillbirth, livebirth)
- There is a lack of evidence on what constitutes 'optimal postpartum care' – what should be done & when
- Postpartum care can be remembered by the 'seven Bs of postpartum care' – a head to toe approach
 - **Blues** (psychological status and wellbeing)
 - **Boobs** (care of breasts and lactation support)
 - **Belly** (fundal assessment)
 - **Bottom** (PV loss and perineal health)
 - **Body** (normal physiological changes related to puerperium; thromboprophylaxis)
 - **Baby** (creating a connection and supporting mother/baby unit)
 - **Bill** (beloved – supporting the partner)
- Try to keep mother and baby together when possible – even a visit is highly valued if baby is well enough
- Consider other technologies to create maternal-infant bond e.g. skype
- If the baby has died, consider keeping the baby in the morgue until the mother is well enough to hold her baby if she wants to – consider creating a set of mementos e.g. hand and foot prints, hair lock
- If the pregnancy ends at or after 20 weeks' gestation – it is required that the baby is registered as a 'birth'

Key resources/recommended reading

Pollock W, Morse K. Chapter 5 'Nursing and midwifery considerations in the ICU setting' pp 43-63 in Van de Velde M, Scholefield H, Plante L [eds] *Maternal Critical Care A Multidisciplinary Approach*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 2013. [for the '7 Bs of postpartum care']

Pollock W. Caring for pregnant and postnatal women in intensive care: what do we know? *Australian Critical Care*. 2006;19(2):54-65.

Fraser DM, Cullen L. Postnatal management and breastfeeding. *Women's Health Medicine*. 2006;3(5):191-6.

Shelton SL. Postpartum Care of Women Affected by Diabetes: A Review of Current Trends. *PLAID-People Living with and Inspired by Diabetes*. 2015;1(2).

Steen S, Ilse S. Mediocre or excellent-where does your facility stand? Becoming a perinatal loss gold standard hospital. *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*. 2015;15(1):1-2.