

Fourth Trimester



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ISBN: 978-625-92737-8-5

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Publisher

MediHealth Academy Publishing

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Graphic-Design

Şerife KUTLU
(MediHealth Academy)

Printed By

Ankara Özgür Offset Printing
1250 Cadde No: 25 Ostim OSB Yenimahalle/Ankara
Sertifika No: 46821



Address: MediHealth Academy Publishing
SBÜ Teknoloji Geliştirme Merkezi (SBÜ TEKMER) Gülhane Yerleşkesi
Emrah Mah. General Dr. Tefik Sağlam Cad. No: 2/67, İç Kapı No: 105
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Preface

I first came to appreciate the true weight of the “fourth trimester” while working in Şanlıurfa-one of Türkiye’s highest-birth-rate cities. In a setting where we regularly managed high-risk pregnancies and fought maternal mortality, my attention was naturally drawn to the drama of labour and delivery. Yet it was the days and weeks after birth that repeatedly reminded me how vulnerable women can remain, and how easily postpartum risks can be missed when care becomes fragmented. That experience reshaped my practice: the postpartum period is not an afterthought-it is a critical window for prevention, timely recognition, and structured follow-up.

This handbook is written for obstetricians and residents as a practical, up-to-date guide to postpartum care. It aims to support clear bedside decisions with concise pathways, escalation thresholds, and “red flag” reminders-while also addressing the problems that most affect recovery and long-term wellbeing. Our goal is simple: to help clinicians deliver consistent, evidence-informed care during the first weeks after birth, when vigilance still matters.

Finally, I want to salute the colleagues who shared that work with me in Şanlıurfa-those who stood beside women at their most critical moments and fought to pull near-miss cases back from the edge. This book carries a part of that effort, and it is dedicated to all who refuse to let the postpartum period be overlooked.

Alev Esercan, Assoc. Prof., MD