

Postpartum

INSTRUCTIONS



Congratulations on the arrival of your new baby! Thank you so much for allowing us to be a part of this momentous occasion. We hope you had a positive experience and received exceptional care from our entire staff. Now that you are past the pregnancy stage, it is time to focus on recovery and childcare. These instructions are a guide to help you recover quickly and be the most comfortable after your delivery. Since every mother and delivery are unique, these guidelines may not fit your situation exactly. Please call our office if you have further questions.

CALL US IMMEDIATELY IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Fever greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit
- Excessive vaginal bleeding; saturating one pad per hour or passing blood clots
- Excessive abdominal pain
- Signs of a breast infection: hard, tender and possibly reddened areas of the breast associated with a fever greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit
- Signs or symptoms of postpartum depression
- Unrelieved headaches or headaches associated with blurred vision
- **For C-section patients:** redness, excessive pain or discharge from the incision
- Isolated redness, pain or swelling
- Shortness of breath or chest pain, call 911

Activity

- Limit your activity for the first two weeks after delivery
- Pelvic rest for six weeks (no tampons, douching, or sexual intercourse)
- No vigorous exercise for six weeks. Mild exercise can be resumed after two weeks if you delivered vaginally
- To alleviate swelling elevate your legs, stay hydrated, and limit your salt intake
- You may drive a car as long as you are not taking prescription pain medication
- Avoid heavy lifting over 10-15 pounds for four weeks

Postpartum Office Visit

Schedule a follow up visit **six weeks** after a vaginal birth and **two weeks** after a cesarean birth. If you have questions before your checkup, please feel free to call our office.

Diet

Continue the same diet you were on while pregnant, making sure you maintain a well-balanced diet with plenty of fresh fruits, green leafy vegetables, fiber and calcium. Drink a minimum of eight glasses of water per day.

Examples of healthy food options:

- Eggs
- Salmon
- Beans
- Sweet potatoes
- Popcorn
- Whole grains
- Walnuts
- Greek yogurt
- Dark green, leafy vegetables
- Lean meats
- Colorful fruits and vegetables

Medications

If you are nursing, be very cautious about the medications you take; medications can enter the breastmilk and affect the baby. Always inform your provider that you are breastfeeding before he/she prescribes any medications for you.

- Continue taking prenatal vitamins until your six week checkup or as long as you are breastfeeding
- Constipation: Colace, Fibercon, Milk of Magnesia, and increase fluids and fiber
- Hemorrhoids: Preparation H, Proctofoam, Tucks Pads
- Pain: Tylenol or ibuprofen is safe to take for minor pains

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Vaginal Stitches

- Vaginal stitches are absorbable
- Keep the area as clean as possible, spray with plain water and pat dry
- Warm sitz baths or tub soaks two to three times a day will ease the soreness
- Apply cold packs or chilled witch-hazel pads
- May use over-the-counter Dermoplast spray
- Apply warm water to the area after urination using a squeeze water bottle
- Wipe from front to back to prevent infection

Care for Your Incision After Cesarean Birth

- Try to keep your incision clean and dry. Dab area dry after showering.
- **DO NOT** use medications or creams (i.e. lotions or Neosporin) unless directed by your provider
- Steri-strips (medical tape) are used to support your incision, do not pull off sooner than one week
- Some numbness and/or itching around the scar is normal
- Call us immediately if you notice any redness, pain or drainage from the incision

Vaginal Bleeding and Discharge

Bleeding commonly lasts about two to eight weeks after delivery. It may be heavy at variable times and passing clots smaller than the size of a quarter is normal. The color will change from bright red to brownish to tan, and will decrease each week. Your periods will return approximately six to eight weeks after delivery if you are not breastfeeding. If you are breastfeeding, your periods may not return for several months.

Call us if you are saturating a pad in one hour, passing blood clots, or have a foul odor to your discharge.

Uterine Cramping

Uterine cramping is normal, especially while nursing. Empty bladder beforehand to reduce cramping.

POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

Giving birth is a joyful experience, but it can also make a new mom feel overwhelmed, stressed and even sad. About three-quarters of women will experience postpartum “blues” within the first few days after delivery, but those feelings typically disappear within four weeks.

Postpartum depression can last up to a year and produce severe symptoms which include:

- Guilt or feelings of worthlessness
- Fatigue, lack of interest in normal activities
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Lack of interest or over concern for the baby

Please contact your OB/GYN if you experience any of these symptoms as you may require additional treatment.

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