



Women's Clinic, Ltd.

POSTPARTUM INSTRUCTIONS

The following is information that will help you to know what is normal and what to expect in the postpartum period.

TEMPERATURE

Your temperature should range between 96-99°. Call us if your temperature elevates to above 100°, but before you call us, please increase fluids.

BREASTS

If you are nursing, some suggestions:

1. Wear a well fitting bra for support.
2. Prior to nursing and after nursing you should try to express a drop of milk or colostrums to moisten the nipple before the baby latches on.
3. Make sure the baby has a good attachment that doesn't make you feel sore. If it feels sore while you are nursing, take the baby off and reattach. The baby may nurse as often as interested, but you may decide to limit the sucking time if your nipples are getting extremely sore. Remember to nurse your baby in a variety of positions to prevent nipple soreness from tongue pressure, and always remember to break the suction before you remove the baby from the breast. If you get sore, air dry well post nursing. You can even use a blow dryer or light treatment. A 25-watt bulb in a desk light held 12 inches away for ten minutes, three times a day may help. You may also use Lanisol ointment or Eucerin cream for soreness. You could try dilute, warm salt-water compresses or warm decaffeinated tea bag applications.
4. For engorgement, you could try ice packs between nursing. You could try raw cabbage leaf, green is preferable, on each breast for ten minutes, three times a day. It is an Australian herbal remedy for engorgement. You could shower and try to express milk between nursing manually, or with a breast pump. We suggest Tylenol every four to six hours for discomfort. Engorgement will probably decrease within a week. Milk will still be there, but the inflammation and engorgement process has gone away.

BOTTLE FEEDING

We suggest you wear a bra day and night for a week. Avoid heat to the breasts. For example, stand with the shower on your back only. Do not express the milk or stimulate the milk. Use the above measures, for example, ice and cabbage.

ABDOMINAL CRAMPING

Your uterus is sensitive and crampy postpartum, especially if it is not your first baby. It might even feel like labor contractions initially. Most of the cramping usually subsides within 24-48 hours. Cramping is normal as your uterus squeezes to assume its normal shape and size.

BOWEL MOVEMENTS:

To encourage regular and soft movements, increase your fluids to 10-12 glasses a day. Increase the roughage in your diet, for example, skins of fruits and vegetables; increase bran cereal, popcorn, salad, etc. You may try Metamucil, Neutrakil, or one or two Colace a day for stool softeners. Other measures might include: equal parts of prune juice, applesauce and flaked bran that you would bake with, eating a few tablespoons before bed at night.

LOCHIA

It is normal to bleed heavier in the first week after having a baby. You should notice then, the next week the flow will decrease in amount of blood, and probably by the third week will be off and on again bleeding – some days not much, some days more. It is normal to notice an increase in bleeding with activity or with nursing. Occasionally you may pass some clots, and that is okay. We are not worried unless the clots are heavy, red, and there is a heavy flooding-type bleeding. You may notice a stronger odor like a menses, but it should not smell foul. Your period may or may not occur, and it is less likely to occur with nursing full time, although occasionally there are women who nurse that do get periods before they come back for their six week postpartum visit.

PERINEUM

Stitches typically feel sore and uncomfortable especially the first week. Call if they are not decreasing but increasing in soreness and discomfort, or you are noticing redness, drainage, a break or an open area in the stitches - please call. Bruising or swelling may be present especially initially. Some suggestions for care would be: Ice, especially the first 24-48 hours – sometimes if there is a lot of tearing or a lot of stitching especially up in the front areas, the ice sometimes really numbs and helps it feel better. Then you would probably proceed with sitz baths or tub soaks three to four times a day. A suggestion would be to add 2-3 tablespoons of salt in the sitz bath or a cup in the tub. If you are going to do a tub soak, please soak first and then wash only before getting out so you are sitting in clean water. You can use Tucks or ProctoFoam as needed and as directed. Change your pad frequently. Don't use tampons. You should keep rinsing after voiding or having a bowel movement with you Peri-bottle and keep doing that as long as your bottom feels sore and you are still having some bleeding. Limit the amount of stretching and pulling on the stitches, such as avoiding steps and tailor sitting. Keeping your legs no further apart than shoulder width is encouraged.

ACTIVITY

The key is to pace yourself. Off your feet more often the first week, then gradually increase activity, but remember to nap when you get a chance. No shopping or prolonged exercises are encouraged, especially when you are doing sitz baths to help tighten the tone. We suggest no sex until the bleeding is done and the perineum feels comfortable. If you don't have an episiotomy or not many stitches and the flow has decreased and you decide to have intercourse, please use a birth control method. The preference would be for condoms in the first six weeks to prevent infection. You may notice that with intercourse you may need extra lubrication especially if you are a breast-feeding mom. You could use K-OY Jelly, AstroGlide or contraceptive gel.

MEDICATIONS

You should be taking prenatal vitamins daily for at least six weeks. If you are nursing, you should take prenats until the baby is weaned. You will be taking your iron tablets as directed for at least six weeks if you had been on them prenatal.

NUTRITION

Drink lots of fluids to replace the fluids lost in labor and birth, for lactation, and to prevent constipation. The goal is about 2-3 quarts a day. Add an additional 300 calories for breast-feeding and eat well. Don't diet initially.

CESAREAN SECTION BIRTH

You will have an incision about 4 inches in width right above the pubic area. You may go home with staples in place, and will be asked to make an appointment with the office for removal one week later. If the staples are removed before you are discharged there will be steri strips applied. You may shower or bathe and as the steri strips loosen you may remove them. Please call if you have a fever, notice redness around the incision, or if the incision site starts to open. It is normal to notice redness around staple sites only. Soreness or incisional discomfort will continue for one to two weeks. It may help to support your incision when coughing, moving, etc. Excessive exercising can damage an incision. NO heavy lifting or strenuous activity for six weeks postpartum!

*Please call for a six (6) week postpartum appointment
or if you have questions after you go home – 610-374-4483.*