

Congratulations on the birth of your baby. While giving birth to a new baby is a joyous time, it is also a time when you need to take special care of yourself.

ACTIVITY

Rest is essential during the first few weeks after the birth of your baby. Try to sleep when your baby sleeps and limit visitors and phone calls. Generally by six weeks you will be ready to resume more strenuous activities such as aerobics, swimming, jogging, etc. Do not drive for two or three weeks or while still taking pain medication. Be patient and kind to yourself; give yourself time to regain your strength and energy.

DIET

We want you to continue with the well-balanced diet that was recommended during your pregnancy. Drink 8 to 10 glasses of water each day as this encourages milk production and prevents constipation. Continue to take your prenatal vitamins until your six week check or as long as you are breast-feeding. Multivitamins with folic acid are recommended during childbearing years.

STITCHES

Your stitches will gradually disappear over four to six weeks. You should soak in a shallow tub of clean warm water three to four times per day to relieve discomfort. Using a squirt bottle with warm water during urination may relieve some discomfort. Air drying the area is beneficial, and you may use Nupercainal ointments or Americaine spray to the area. Tylenol or Ibuprofen, according to directions, may be helpful if needed.

BOWEL CARE

Your first bowel movement may be delayed a couple of days. Remember to drink 8 to 10 glasses of water per day and maintain a high fiber diet in order to prevent constipation. You may use Milk of Magnesia, Colace or Fibercon.

Hemorrhoids may be relieved by Tucks, Anusol or Preparation H or generic. Remember, keeping bowel movements soft, with extra fluids, fruits and vegetables, will also help to resolve hemorrhoids.

SHOWER/BATH

Showers and baths may be taken after discharge from the hospital. C-Section patients should avoid baths for the first two weeks.

INTERCOURSE/CONTRACEPTION

You may resume intercourse after 4 to 6 weeks, if you are comfortable and vaginal bleeding has stopped. You may notice a decrease in vaginal lubrication, especially if you are breast-feeding. Water-based lubricants, such as K-Y Jelly or Astroglide may be helpful. Remember, you can become pregnant again before your next period **EVEN IF YOU ARE BREAST-FEEDING**. Be sure you use contraceptive foam and condoms for birth control until your six-week check up.

VAGINAL BLEEDING

For the first three to five days you may have bleeding heavier than a period. This may be followed by light bleeding and spotting for **several weeks**. The bleeding pattern varies from person to person. You may notice a "gush" or a few clots when you stand up after lying down. You may also notice the flow become a darker red with increased activity and breast-feeding. These are all normal. However, if you saturate a pad in 1 hour for 2 to 3 consecutive hours, or 4 or more in one hour, and it does not decrease with rest or uterine massage, you should call the office. If you are not nursing, the first period usually occurs about six to ten weeks after delivery. If you are nursing, it is normal not to have a period or only an occasional period. Do not use tampons until your six-week checkup.

BREASTS

It is important to wear a good support bra whether or not you plan to breast-feed. You may feel more comfortable by wearing a bra 24 hours a day for the first few weeks after delivery.

If you are not breast-feeding you may experience breast engorgement. Wear a tight fitting bra, or bind your breasts for the first week. Avoid breast stimulation (warm showers, intimate contact with your partner). Using ice packs, and Tylenol or Ibuprofen may relieve your discomfort. If you decide to stop nursing, **TAPER OFF GRADUALLY** over several days and follow the above instructions.

If you are breast-feeding, always be sure to wash your hands before beginning, to prevent the spread of germs to your breasts and your baby. Proper positioning of the baby and latch onto the breast is essential. The baby should be held close, directly facing the nipple, and the lips wide around the dark (areola) area.

Anhydrous lanolin or strong tea water may be used after feedings to ease sore nipples. Never use soap on your nipples. In the early days, you should try to nurse 8 times in 24 hours.

If you have problems or concerns with breast-feeding, call the lactation specialist at our office during business hours.

C-SECTION

In addition to the above suggestions, keep your incision clean and dry. If staples have been used to close your incision, they will usually be removed before discharge from the hospital and steri-strips will be applied. Remove the steri-strips as they loosen or in one week. If you notice redness or drainage, please call our office.

Showers may be taken immediately. After showering, pat dry the incision. You may also use a hand dryer on "cool". If incision is under a fold of skin, you may place a clean dry washcloth or maxi pad over it to keep it dry. Do not apply any ointments to your incision without first talking to your physician.

Do not resume any heavy activity (lifting more than 10-15 pounds, abdominal exercises, etc.) for at least six weeks.

AFTER BABY BLUES

Every woman may experience some feelings of sadness or depression following delivery. This is in part due to hormone fluctuations and demands of a new baby, as well as other factors. This may occur as early as 3 days following delivery or as long as up to 1 year or as long as breast-feeding. This can be normal and normally lasts only a few days. Try to rest as much as you can and eat well. Also, it may be helpful to try to make time for yourself. Get some fresh air; go for a short walk. Ask for help from others with household demands. If these symptoms last longer than 48 hours you should contact your doctor.

WHEN TO SEE YOUR DOCTOR

To schedule your six week post partum check-up please call our office as soon as possible after discharge.

REMEMBER

Call our office immediately if you experience:

- Persistent heavy bleeding
- A temperature above 100.4 F
- Any unusual pain in your breasts, back, abdomen or legs
- Drainage from your incision
- Depression or anxiety

If you have any other questions or problems, please call our office weekdays between 8 AM and 5 PM.

We do not fill pain medication after office hours or on weekends, so please make sure you plan ahead.

**CONGRATULATIONS!
ENJOY YOUR NEW BABY!**