

## Postpartum Information

### Adjustment

Caring for a newborn can be exhausting and overwhelming. Take advantage of help offered by family and friends and opportunities to rest while your baby is sleeping.

Some women experience night sweats or hot flashes from hormonal adjustments. Some amount of hair loss is normal during the postpartum period. It is not normal to have any bald patches on your scalp.

Postpartum mood swings are common and can include joyful and crying spells. **If depression symptoms are severe, please let us know.**

### Bleeding

Postpartum discharge (also called lochia) may continue for up to six weeks. It may progress from red blood to rust-colored to yellow or clear discharge. Sometimes it can stop and restart and may also increase if you are physically active.

### Episiotomy care

This area may be tender and uncomfortable for several weeks. Sitz or tub baths three times a day for 15-30 minutes are soothing and helpful in healing. Avoid constipation and use your pain medication as necessary. The stitches will dissolve. Do not be alarmed if you find suture material in your pad. If you notice increased pain or bleeding, please call.

### Activity

You should resume activity at your own pace. Carrying your baby and walking up stairs is fine. If you have had a C-section avoid lifting anything heavier than your baby. Children may sit on your lap.

Exercise can be resumed gradually. Start with stretching and walking.

### Birth Control

Intimacy can be resumed after your postpartum visit. With breastfeeding, it is unclear how soon you will ovulate or experience menses. Therefore, if you desire contraception, it is a good idea to select a method at your postpartum visit. Options include barrier methods or progesterone-only hormonal methods, including pills and the Mirena IUD. Paraguard IUD may also be used.

If you are no longer breastfeeding, combined oral contraceptives are also an option.

## **Nutrition**

While breastfeeding, continue prenatal vitamins and any iron that your doctor may have recommended. Staying well hydrated (eight glasses of water per day) will help with milk production. Over-hydrating can decrease your milk supply.

## **Constipation**

Drink plenty of fluids and focus on food naturally high in fiber such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Over the counter fiber supplements such as Metamucil or Citracal are fine.

Stool softeners (Colace) can be continued. If it has been several days since a bowel movement, a laxative such as Milk of Magnesia or Senokot is recommended.

Hemorrhoids are quite common following delivery. Sitz or tub baths, witch hazel pads (Tucks), and/or hemorrhoidal ointment can all be soothing.

## **Post-Cesarean Section**

Remove steri-strips covering incision in one week. It is okay if they fall off before that. You may clean your incision with plain water in the shower and thoroughly dry it afterwards. Do not apply anything else to the incision. If your incision becomes red, swollen, or oozing, please call the office.

Wound healing takes at least 4-6 weeks. Avoid driving for two weeks or as long as you are taking narcotic pain medications. It is normal to have some numbness or tingling at the incision site as healing occurs.

Vigorous exercise such as aerobics, running, or biking should be avoided until six weeks postpartum or cleared by a provider in the office.

## **Call The Office If You Have:**

- Fever greater than 100°
- Significantly increased bleeding, saturating more than one pad per hour
- Nausea and vomiting
- Painful urination, burning or urgency
- Pain or tenderness in one or both legs
- Chest pain, difficulty breathing
- Hot, tender, reddened area in your breast
- Persistent or increasing perineal pain
- Depression or inability to care for yourself or your baby