

Your Care After Birth



During the first few days of recovery post-delivery, your body will be undergoing many physical changes. These instructions have been prepared to assist you in recognizing the normal progression of recovery. You will need to report to your doctor any warning signs or potential problems symptoms which are also described below.

Rest

- Adequate rest is essential for recovery. Rest is important for tissue healing and for helping your hormone levels return back to normal. Try to aim for 1-2 naps a day, although this will be a challenge with the sleep patterns of your newborn! A golden rule is to sleep whenever baby sleeps.
- Try to get help with household work while you take care of your baby as much as you can. Do not be ashamed to withdraw in front of friends or relatives if you need to rest.
- Avoid lifting, especially other children. Sit to hold them.

Nutrition

- Continue to take your prenatal vitamins and iron (if prescribed) until you see your physician for your routine postpartum examination (around 40 days after delivery).
- Eat three well – balanced meals per day. If you are breastfeeding,

you will need to increase caloric intake by 500 calories/day.

- The recovery period is a process of healing and returning to non pregnant status. This takes time! Be patient with yourself. If you wish to watch your diet, wait until you are at least 1 month postpartum.

Contractions & Uterine Healing

Your uterus will return to normal size in 5-6 weeks. This is achieved by contractions which may cause you pain for the first few days. Your doctor may prescribe medication to reduce the pain.

Bleeding

- Generally, during the first 3-5 days you will have red, bloody mucous. With time, the discharge will become pink and progress to a brown discharge. After 3-4 weeks the discharge may become watery and almost colorless.
- You may notice an increase in

bleeding with increased activity. Listen to your body and slow down.

Warnings

Call your doctor if you experience the following symptoms:

- Bleeding heavier than a normal period even after several days
- You are passing clots larger than a golf ball
- You have any questions about the amount of blood loss
- Your discharge has an unusually foul odor

Episiotomy

- If you had an episiotomy, it will heal within a couple of weeks. The stitches will dissolve. They do not need to be removed.
- Pain and itching in the area of episiotomy are common during healing.
- To aid with pain and promote healing, do your Kegel exercises

frequently.

- Get plenty of rest.
- Your doctor may prescribe medication(s); among which probably a stool softener to reduce the pressure on the pelvic area; take the medication as directed.
- To reduce risk of infection, cleanse the area by regularly washing with normal soap and water. The area needs to dry very well, either by air drying, or patting dry gently, or blowing with a blow dryer on the "cool" setting. Cleanse the perineal area from front to back.
- No intercourse, vaginal douching, or anything in vagina for 6 weeks/40 days.

Warnings

Call your doctor if you experience the following symptoms:

- You feel an increase in discomforts
- Your perineum becomes red, swollen or opens up
- You have a temperature above 38°C

Cesarean Incision

- Your incision does not need special care. Wear loose clothes to minimize irritation in wound area. Keep the wound dry and clean on free air if possible.
- You may shower already from the 1st day of surgery.
- If your incision was left on free air, you may shower without a cover on your incision. If your physician left a dressing on your wound, change the dressing as per physician's order.
- Small amounts of pink, strawberry colored or white discharge may be noticed.
- Your doctor will instruct you when to come to the office to have your sutures removed.
- Pain and itching are common while healing during the first 2 weeks. Your doctor will prescribe pain medication. Take as directed.

- Refrain from bending and lifting.
- Limit stair-climbing and driving for the first 2 weeks postpartum.

Warnings

Call your doctor if you experience the following symptoms:

- Redness at the site of the incision
- Swelling or lumps around your incision
- Increase in pain or tenderness at the site of the incision
- Drainage from the incision
- If you have a temperature of 38°C

Bladder

- You may notice an increase in frequency and large amounts of urine during the first 5-2 days. This is your body's way of getting rid of excess fluid.
- You may notice incontinence (no control of the urine) for several days after delivery. Do pelvic exercises (Kegel) to maintain your muscle strength. (Ask the nurse or midwife at the hospital). If the incontinence is lasting more than a few weeks, then you may need to undergo physiotherapy to re-strengthen your muscles.

Warnings

Call your doctor if you experience the following symptoms:

- Burning, frequency or urgency with urination
- If you frequently feel the urge to urinate but are only voiding small amounts
- Pain in the lower back
- You have a temperature of 38°C

Bowel Movements

- It is normal to be apprehensive about the first bowel movement after delivery.

To ensure a soft stool:

- » Drink approximately 1.5-2L of water daily.
- » Eat food high in fiber (vegetables especially green leafy ones, wheat fruits and fruit juices, and bran cereals).
- » Move around and walk often after delivery.
- » Use a natural stool softener (check with your doctor).
- For difficulty in having a bowel movement, you may use suppository (Check with your doctor).
- Relax. Do not force or strain.
- If hemorrhoids develop, call your doctor.
- Cleanse the area from front to back to prevent vaginal contamination.

Warnings

Call your doctor if you experience the following symptoms:

- You do not have a bowel movement in 4-5 days from delivery

If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to call us at:

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