

POST PARTUM CARE

Congratulations on the birth of your baby! As you get to know your baby, take time to take care of yourself as well. Here are some things you can expect in the weeks following your delivery.

VAGINAL SORENESS:

If you had an episiotomy or vaginal tear, you may be sore for a few weeks especially when you walk or sit. Try these strategies to promote healing and ease soreness.

Use ice packs for swelling

Use witch hazel pads, or tucks, and anusol or dermaplast spray every time you use the bathroom

Use a squirt bottle of warm water to rinse the perineum

Use the sitz bath 2-3 times a day for the first 2 weeks.

Do Kegel exercises to tone pelvic muscles

Look for signs of infection. If pain worsens instead of improving, or perineum becomes hot, swollen, or produces a pus-like foul smelling discharge, call the office.

VAGINAL DISCHARGE:

Lochia, (vaginal discharge) will continue for up to six weeks after delivery. The discharge will be a red, heavy flow for a few days, especially after long periods of sitting or lying down. The discharge will gradually taper off and change in color from pink to brown, to yellowish. Do not use tampons or take baths until after your postpartum check up. You may occasionally pass clots, do not be concerned unless they are frequent or very large. Vaginal discharge will be lighter if you had a c-section.

Call the office if you soak a sanitary pad in an hour when lying down, discharge has a foul odor, you pass a clot larger than a golf ball, or you have a fever of 100.4 or higher.

BOWEL MOVEMENTS:

You may be afraid to have a bowel movement due to perineal pain or episiotomy or hemorrhoids. To prevent constipation, eat foods high in fiber, drink plenty of fluids, use stool softeners as directed, be as physically active as possible. Use witch hazel pads on hemorrhoids as needed.

BREAST CARE:

A few days after delivery, your breasts may become heavy, swollen, and tender. This is called engorgement and is due to your milk coming in. During engorgement, you may experience a low grade fever.

Take Tylenol for fever as needed

To ease discomfort, nurse your baby often, or use a breast pump to express milk

If breast is hard, apply warm washcloth to breast prior to feeding to soften breast

Wear a supportive bra

Sore Nipples: To prevent and treat sore nipples, make sure baby is latched on properly
Use lanolin cream after nursing
Allow nipples to air dry after feeding
Change baby's position when nursing

Blocked Ducts: Milk ducts can become blocked and you will feel hard nodules in your breast. If this happens, apply a warm compress to the affected area, gently massage the area and feed on affected side first. It may take a few days for duct to unclog.

Call the office if temperature goes over 100.4, breast is warm or hot to the touch, or has red streaks.

EMOTIONS:

In the weeks following delivery, you may find that you are more emotional. Sadness, irritability, and anxiety are common. Many new moms experience a mild depression, known as “baby blues”. The baby blues and mood swings usually subside in a week or two.

To prevent and alleviate mood swings the first few weeks postpartum:

Sleep, sleep, sleep. When baby sleeps, so should you.

Eat regular meals

Drink lots of fluids

Let others help with housework and baby care

If depression deepens or you feel hopeless, sad, or overwhelmed all of the time, get in touch with the office and schedule an appointment. Early treatment is important!

POSTPARTUM VISIT:

Your doctor will tell you when to come to the office for your postpartum check-up. This usually occurs 6-8 weeks after delivery. If you had a c-section, you may be asked to come in sooner. At this appointment, the doctor will do a vaginal exam to make sure everything is healing properly. If you are due for a pap smear, it will be done at this time. This visit is a good time to discuss birth control options and any other concerns you may have.

Enjoy your baby and this special time. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact the office.