

Post-Partum Instructions

During the past nine months your body has undergone many changes due to your pregnancy. It will take approximately one month to six weeks for your body to regain its pre-pregnant state. This requires you to restrict your activities and follow these instructions until we see you in six weeks.

ACTIVITY:

Restrict unnecessary physical activity for at least seven days. Try to limit climbing stairs or lifting heavy objects. Do not attempt to take over full household activities and avoid strenuous activity until your six-week checkup. Take morning and afternoon rest periods. After the first week, you may gradually increase your activity. At the end of 2 weeks, you may take short walks. Short automobile rides are also permissible. You may go to a restaurant for dinner and you may visit friends for short periods of time. After 2 weeks, if there have been no fainting or dizzy spells, you may drive your car for short periods. However, avoid heavy lifting at this time. We would prefer that you do no formal calisthenics or post-partum exercise during the first two weeks.

After a cesarean delivery, you should limit your activities more because of the incision in your abdomen. Do not lift anything heavier than the baby for 2 weeks. Limit stairs to one trip up and down each day for 2 weeks. Remember that even when the incision heals perfectly, it takes the full six weeks for it to get strong enough for all your usual activities.

BATHING:

You may shower, sponge bathe and wash your hair during the first 2 weeks. If your stitches are painful or you have a problem with hemorrhoids, a sitz bath in 3-4 inches of warm water may be very helpful. This may be done as many as 3 times a day, but please do not take a full tub bath during this time. Do not douche for the first six weeks.

SEXUAL INTERCOURSE:

Do not have intercourse until your six-week checkup. During this post-partum period, the uterus contains a great deal of blood and material which provides an excellent medium for bacteria. We do not wish to encounter any infection, and therefore, it is wise to avoid intercourse in this six-week post-partum period.

STITCHES:

Your stitches will dissolve and need not be removed. No special care is necessary for your stitches at this

Post-Partum Instructions 2

INCISIONS – TUBAL LIGATION or CESAREAN DELIVERY:

You may shower. Dry the incision gently and completely. If you have staples in a cesarean incision, they will be removed from your incision before you leave the hospital. If Steri-strips were used, you may remove the Steri-strips after 1 week. Be sure to notify the office if the incision becomes red, warm, tender or has any drainage.

POST-PARTUM EXAMINATION:

Make an appointment for 6 weeks after delivery for a full checkup. If you have had a cesarean or a tubal ligation, you should also come in for a 2-week checkup. Be sure to call the office if you have any questions or problems including:

1. Temperature above 100.4 or chills
2. Frequency or burning with urination
3. Redness, warmth or tenderness of one area of your breasts
4. Severe abdominal pain or cramping
5. Significant increase in vaginal bleeding which is not related to increased activity
6. Swelling, redness, tenderness or drainage from cesarean or tubal ligation incision

CIRCUMCISION:

If the baby is a boy and has had a circumcision:

1. Bathe the penis with warm water at each diaper change
2. For the first week, apply Vaseline to the inside of the diaper where it comes in contact with the penis
3. Gently pull the skin back once a day in order to prevent adhesions around the glans of the penis
4. It is normal for an exudate to form in the area of the circumcision

BABY CARE:

You should choose a pediatrician or family physician to care for your baby. The hospital will contact your physician to see the baby while you are in the hospital. If your physician does not come to the hospital, the nursery pediatrician will care for your baby while you are there. You will then need to contact the physician you have chosen for the follow-up care.

CONSTIPATION:

Constipation is sometimes a problem during the post-partum period. Normal bowel movements will be encouraged if you drink at least 8 glasses of liquid daily. Use prunes or other stewed fruit in the morning or prune juice if necessary. You may use two Senokot tablets at bedtime to stimulate a bowel movement. Try to go to the bathroom at about the same time every day so that you will develop a normal bowel habit. If you have had problems with constipation in the past, Colace (an over the counter medication) taken once in the morning and once at night for the first 2 weeks may promote regular bowel movements. You may take this medication while nursing. For extreme constipation (no bowel movement in 4 or more days), you may take Milk of Magnesia as directed.

Post-Partum Instructions 3

SWELLING:

You may have swelling of your feet and ankles for the first week after delivery. Try to rest with your feet up and drink plenty of water. Call us if one leg is more swollen than the other, or if there is redness or tenderness.

NURSING:

If you are nursing your baby, we would suggest that you continue with your prenatal vitamins. Be extremely careful about your hygiene. Wash your hands thoroughly and carefully before nursing. If your nipples should crack or become sore, the Vitamin E oil will be helpful. If localized caking takes place, apply warm compresses 3 times daily. In the event that you notice a sore, red, localized area in the breast and have a fever, notify us immediately. If you are nursing, you need to drink about 1 quart of extra fluid daily to ensure good milk supply.

If you are not nursing, wear a snug brassiere or binder night and day for at least 1 week. A binder may be made from a towel, a diaper, or a piece of sheet. Fold it to a thickness of 3-4 layers, about 6-8 inches wide. Wrap this snugly around your chest to support your breasts firmly and hold the binder in place with a row of safety pins. If the breasts become full or uncomfortable, apply an ice bad to the breasts 3 times daily for 20 minutes. You may take Tylenol every 4 hours if necessary for pain.

BLEEDING:

The flow of blood may continue, slightly to moderately, for 1-6 weeks following delivery. Do not use tampons until you have your first period. If there is any profuse or heavy bleeding at any time, let us know. Your first menstrual period may be heavier than normal. If it becomes profuse, do not hesitate to notify us. If you are still bleeding at the time of the 6 weeks checkup, come in anyway because this should be investigated.