

Postpartum Instructions

Mom

Have an adult with you for the first 24 – 48 hours.

Bleeding

- The largest amount of blood loss postpartum occurs within the first 24 hours of birth.
- Expect to feel “gushes” of bleeding when changing position from lying down to sitting or standing and when nursing. It is also normal to pass some blood clots.
- You will be instructed on how to check the tone of your uterus. Anytime you are concerned about your bleeding, check your uterus; it should feel hard and firm. If it feels soft massage it gently, stimulate your nipples or get the baby to nurse.
- Soak a maternity pad (end to end) in less than ½ an hour is too much bleeding. Get your uterus to contract to slow the bleeding.
- Any bleeding should always smell like your menstrual period. Report any foul odor.

Perineal Care, basic

- Rinse the area using a “peri” bottle each time you use the toilet and pat dry. You can use an herbal “sitz bath tea” or plain water in the peri bottle.

Afterbirth Contractions

- If you are having your 2nd or subsequent baby, you may experience strong afterbirth contractions for the first 1-3 days.
- Some options for relieving the intensity of these contractions are as follows:
 - *keep your bladder empty (this will also help minimize your bleeding)
 - *Herbal tinctures - crampbark or crampbark & motherwort tincture added to drinks and/or put directly under your tongue when you nurse.
 - *Herbal teas - chamomile tea every time you nurse. Red raspberry leaf
 - *After emptying your bladder you can lie flat on your stomach. This will help hold your uterus firm, reducing its size faster.
 - *If you cannot find relief, Tylenol or Ibuprofen may be taken.

Nutrition

- You will still need extra calories and nutritious foods to build and maintain a good milk supply. Eat plenty of iron rich foods.
- Continue taking your prenatal vitamins and supplements.
- Drink lots of water (2-3 quarts per day) and other nutritious non-caffeinated liquids to replenish fluids lost during the birth and to help establish a good milk supply.

Activity

- You may take a shower or bath right away with an adult near by to assist you in case you feel faint.
- For the first few weeks get plenty of rest, limit your visitors (unless they are there to help) and avoid excessive stair climbing.
- If your bleeding slows down over a few days, then starts back up bright red, this is a sign that you are overexerting yourself. Slow down (lift no more than your baby, no outings/errands, no vigorous housecleaning, limit stair climbing, etc.) and your bleeding should slow down to a normal level.

Breast/Breastfeeding (See “Enjoying Your Newborn” handout and other breastfeeding information)

Please call if you experience any of the following in the following days/months:

- *Soaking a maternity pad (end to end) in less than ½ an hour
- *Passing clots larger than your fist
- *Fever of 101 for any reason or fever that persists for over 24 hours
- *Red, hot, sore, painful area on breast, especially if experiencing flu like symptoms
- *Swollen, red, hot painful area on your leg that is tender to the touch
- * Unusual or foul smelling vaginal bleeding
- *Feeling extremely anxious, panicky, or depressed. Rapid heart rate, difficulty breathing, or inability to sleep or eat.