

## POSTPARTUM INSTRUCTIONS

We hope that your delivery was a positive and memorable experience for you. Good common sense will be your best guide in the postpartum weeks. The following is intended to answer many of the commonly asked questions. Please do not hesitate to ask for further information or explanations.

### Postpartum Check Up

We want to see you in the office for a postpartum checkup in 2 weeks after a C-section or 6 weeks after a vaginal delivery or as your physician directs. Call the office as soon as you are released from the hospital to make an appointment. Our appointment line number is 937-531-0190, option 1.

### Activity

It usually is 6-8 weeks from delivery until you return to "normal." Recovery is a progressive process and you will feel stronger day by day. Once again, your common sense will be the best guide of your activity level.

1. You may do low impact exercise as tolerated.
2. Steps are fine, but limit your trips up and down as you will be more tired than usual.
3. REFRAIN FROM VAGINAL PENETRATION – No sex, tampons or douching until seen for a postpartum visit.
4. Rest is essential. Sleep deprivation is very difficult for most new parents to handle.
5. Limit social activity and entertaining visitors for the first few weeks.
6. If you have had a Cesarean Section, you may not lift anything heavier than 10-15 lbs., or anything that may require 2 arms, until you are seen for your postpartum visit.

### Vaginal Discharge

The vaginal discharge can last from 2-8 weeks, gradually becoming lighter. If there is a marked

increase in flow, decrease your activity. If you are soaking / overflowing a maxi pad an hour for more than 2 hours, you need to call the office during normal hours or GO TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT if the office is closed. Nursing may help to decrease bleeding.

### Bathing

Avoid tub baths for 2 weeks. Showers are fine and relaxing. If your doctor has recommended a sitz bath, you may sit in approximately 2 inches of plain comfortably warm water in a tub for 10-15 minutes, 2-3 times per day, as desired for vaginal and episiotomy discomfort.

### Incision Care After Cesarean Section

After showering, pat your incision with a towel to dry it. If you have skin folds that cover the incision, lift up and use a blow dryer on a cool setting to dry. You may remove remaining steri strips at 10 days.

### Swelling

It is normal for swelling to persist after delivery. This could last for up to 2 weeks. Stay well hydrated. Elevating your legs may help lower extremity edema. You may use sitz baths / ice pack for vulvar swelling.

### Breast Care

If you are not nursing and your breasts become engorged, bind them with a tight bra and maintain this until relief is obtained. Apply ice packs (wrapped in a towel for insulation) to each breast for an hour, 3-4 times a day. You may also try using a non-steroid anti-inflammatory drug (ex. Aleve, Motrin). You should get relief in 24-48 hours. Avoid any stimulation to the nipples. Cool cabbage leaves applied to the breast may be helpful as well. You should wear a bra to bed for the first 4-5 days. If you notice an area on either breast that is red and warm, or if you develop a fever, you should call the

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office during normal hours or go to the Emergency Department if the office is closed. You may have an infection that requires antibiotics.

### Constipation

Constipation is common during the postpartum period. Drink plenty of water and juices, and eat plenty of fiber. A mild laxative and / or stool softener can be used and can be purchased without a prescription.

### Onset Of Menstruation

The first period after delivery commonly occurs within 6-10 weeks. Don't be alarmed if your first period doesn't occur for up to 3 months after you have given birth. Menstruation may be delayed even longer when nursing. Nursing mothers may not have a period until they wean the infant from breast feeding. The first few menstrual cycles in both nursing and non-nursing mothers are often irregular and may be heavier and longer than previous periods.

### Driving

If you had a vaginal delivery you may drive anytime as long as you are not too sore, light headed, or taking narcotics. If you had a Cesarean section you may drive in 2 weeks if you are not taking narcotics.

### Sexual Activity

You will probably be cleared to resume sexual activity after your doctor has seen you at your postpartum exam. **WARNING:** You can conceive postpartum even without periods and while breast feeding. If you chose to have intercourse, you should have your partner use a condom and spermicide.

### Travel

We do not restrict your travel after delivery. We recommend that you check with your Pediatrician concerning your newborn.

### Postpartum Concerns

After leaving the hospital it is generally not necessary for you to be checked before the 6 weeks examination. If any of the following should occur, please contact the office during normal hours or page the On-Call physician after hours.

1. Fever / Temperature of 101 or higher.
2. Evidence of breast infection, redness or pain in breasts.
3. Frequency or burning during urination
4. Excessive vaginal bleeding (saturating a pad per hour for 2 hours).
5. Persistent headache (unresponsive to Tylenol or Ibuprofen)
6. Incision that is red or draining pus or blood.
7. Blood pressure great than 150 systolic (top number) or greater than 100 diastolic (bottom number).
8. Loss of central vision.
9. Severe abdominal pain.
10. Persistent nausea / vomiting.
11. Severe genital or hemorrhoid pain.
12. Severe flu like symptoms.