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OBSTETRICS \* GYNECOLOGY \* INFERTILITY

## POSTPARTUM INSTRUCTIONS

**Congratulations** on the birth of your new baby! We hope the following information will help you during the first few weeks after you return home. Please call our office soon after you are settled to make an appointment for approximately 6 weeks from the date of your delivery.

### POST OP CARE

If you had a cesarean section, and staples were used to close your incision, then you need to call our office ASAP and make an appointment to be seen in 5-7 days. A staple remover and steri-strips will be given to you by the nurse on the day of discharge. Bring them to the office for your post op visit to have your staples removed. If you have steri-strips on your incision and staples were not used, then you can take them off in 5 days in the shower.

### ACTIVITY

Slowly increase your activity level when you arrive home. If you must climb stairs, go slowly and be careful. Do not lift anything heavier than your baby for the first week, or if you had a C-section, for four weeks. You may rest or take short walks outside.

Driving should be prohibited for at least one week, and three weeks if you had a C-section. Make sure you get as much rest as possible with frequent naps during the day.

Showers are preferable to tub baths. If your episiotomy stitches are painful, sitting in shallow (four inches) water such as a sitz bath may help reduce pain and swelling. Make sure your postpartum nurse gives you instructions on episiotomy stitches care. If you had a C-section, gently clean your incision each time you shower and pat dry. Do not use soap on your incision.

You may begin postpartum exercises when you get home. If you had a C-section, wait three weeks before starting the program.

### BREAST CARE

A well-fitting and supportive bra should be worn day and night until the breasts return to normal size. This will help to prevent stretching of ligaments.

If you are breast-feeding, drink as much fluid, especially water, as possible. Avoid excessive caffeine and alcohol, and eat a well balanced diet. Your uterus will contract while breast-feeding, and you may have heavier bleeding during feeding. Advil or Motrin may be used for the pain relief. Air dry your nipples after feeding. Breast pads may be used in your bra to absorb any leaking. If you notice breast redness, soreness and/or have a temperature over 101F- CALL US IMMEDIATELY - you may have an infection.

If you are not breast-feeding, you should wear a bra at all times. If your breasts become engorged with milk, wear a tight bra and apply ice packs. Take Tylenol or Motrin for the discomfort.

## **VAGINAL PERINEAL CARE**

Change pads often and with each voiding. The bleeding will gradually turn dark brown, then yellow and may last up to six weeks. **DO NOT USE TAMPONS!** After urinating or moving your bowels, cleanse your episiotomy area with water, and gently dry, wiping from front to back.

If you are not breast-feeding, you may have a menstrual period as early as four weeks after delivery, but often it will take six to eight weeks for menses to resume. If you are breast-feeding, it may be several months before you will resume menstruation, or not at all while breast-feeding.

**DO NOT HAVE SEXUAL INTERCOURSE** until after your postpartum visit. Please review literature on various methods of contraception so you may be prepared to discuss your options at your postpartum visit.

## **MEDICATIONS**

Medications allowed for postpartum (breast-feeding included):

Plain Tylenol or Extra-strength Tylenol for headaches.

Mylanta for acid indigestion

Anusol or Preparation H for hemorrhoids

Prenatal Vitamins to be continued for three months after delivery; for breast-feeding mothers as long as you are nursing.

Peri-Colace, Colace, Senokot, Metamucil for constipation. Any other medications must be approved by your pediatrician if you are breast feeding.

Advil or Motrin for uterine contractions

Iron - if you were on iron supplements prior to delivery, continue taking it for 3 months.

## **CIRCUMCISION CHECK**

If a circumcision was done on your baby boy, the pediatrician can check the baby at his one week appointment to check the healing process.

## **CALL THE OFFICE IF YOU HAVE:**

CHILLS OR FEVER ABOVE 101F

HEAVY BLEEDING (changing pads every thirty minutes for two hours)

PAIN WITH URINATION

SEVERE PAIN OR REDNESS OF THE BREASTS

REDNESS, SWELLING AND/OR PUS FROM THE C-SECTION INCISION

DIZZINESS OR FAINTING,

SEVERE ABDOMINAL PAIN OR VOMITTING