



POSTPARTUM HELPFUL HINTS

Congratulations! Now the fun begins. All of your hard work has paid off and it's time to enjoy your baby. Expect some fatigue and mood swings. Labor is hard work. You may be especially tired if you labored and then had a C-section. This may be more noticeable if you have other children at home. Within a few days of delivery you will notice a big change in your body and your moods. There is a large shift in body fluids and hormones that may affect how you feel. Be patient, every day should bring an improvement.

Episiotomy Care

If you had an episiotomy or a tear, you can expect to have some discomfort. Some things that are helpful are warm sitz baths followed by using a hair dryer on low setting to keep you bottom clean. Avoid tight clothes and change your pads frequently. Do not use tampons, or a douche. You should get better every day. If you have an increase in pain or notice a foul smelling discharge, you need to look at your stitches. If you see any redness or separation of the sutures, call our office. Occasionally the stitches will dissolve faster than the tissue heals and you will notice some small stitches when you wipe. If you have increase in pain, discharge or a temperature greater than 100.5 please contact our office.

Bowel Movement

Some people really dread their first bowel movement after delivery. You were given some Colace with the self-dose pack from the hospital. Take the Colace twice a day with a large glass of water. If you are still constipated, you can add milk of magnesia in the evening. Until you are comfortable with your bowel movements, you can stop taking your prenatal vitamins. Once things seem back to normal, resume your vitamins.

Hemorrhoids

If you are bothered by hemorrhoids, keep your bowels soft with the Colace, increase the fiber in your diet with bulking agents such as Metamucil, and use either Tucks pads or Preparation H pads with each bowel movement. Occasionally a hemorrhoid will have a clot that doesn't dissolve and will be very uncomfortable. If you have tried all of the above measures and you still are not better, you need to call the office (338-8900).

Breast Care

If you chose to bottle feed, you will still have your milk come in. This usually happens in 48-72 hours after delivery. You will want to minimize the amount of stimulation to your nipples to avoid "encouraging" continued milk production. Wear a well-fitting bra and avoid changing the bra for 2-3 days. Avoid showers! It is also helpful to use a wide (6 or 8 inch) Ace bandage wrap and "bind" yourself to decrease any stimulation. Ice packs will also decrease the amount of engorgement when your milk comes in. Once your body senses that milk production is not necessary, your milk will dry up. If you have leakage that persists, just repeat the above steps. If you have a temperature that is greater than 100.5 or your breasts become red and tender, you need to call the office.

Mastitis/Sore Nipples

If you are breast-feeding and feel like you have the flu, you may have mastitis. You may have a fever and breast tenderness as well. You will need antibiotics to clear up mastitis. Call immediately if you have any of the above symptoms. Be sure that the baby has all of the nipple and most of the areola in their mouth when they latch on. Position the baby in various ways to allow the baby to latch on “differently” with each feeding. Be sure to allow your nipples to: “air dry” a few minutes after each feeding. Keep your pads dry and try to use cloth when possible. Paper disposable pads are sometimes irritating. Occasionally a milk duct will become clogged. There is usually some discomfort, but no fever or flu-like symptoms. Warm compresses and massaging the breast to aid in employing will help.

Lochia

The discharge after a delivery is called lochia. Initially it will be as heavy as a period, but should become lighter over a week to ten days. You may notice an increase in the discharge after nursing or an increased activity level. If the discharge increases or becomes bright red, decrease your activity level. If this does not help to reduce the flow, call the office.

Birth Control

Believe it or not, you will have the desire for intercourse again. There is no magic time frame to resume intercourse. You should wait until your lochia has stopped and you are no longer sore. If you are breast-feeding you may need some extra lubrication. Unless you want babies nine months apart you will need to use birth control. You will ovulate PRIOR to your next period. While lactation will delay ovulation, many people become pregnant while breast-feeding. Good choices for contraception included Depo-Provera injections, birth control pills, IUD's or a diaphragm. Condoms are also a good choice, especially when teamed with a spermicide.

Office Follow Up

You will need to schedule a 6-week postpartum exam. If you had a C-section, you will need to schedule 2 week and 6-week postpartum exams. At this time we will discuss birth control, breast-feeding, emotions, etc.

Pain Medicine

Once you have used all of the tablets in your hospital pack, you can use plain Tylenol or Motrin. If you need a refill on your pain medicine, please call the office during regular office hours.

Postpartum Depression

About 2-3 days after childbirth, some women begin to feel depressed, anxious and upset. They may feel angry with the new baby, their partners, or their other children. They also may cry for no clear reason; have trouble sleeping, eating, and making choices; and question whether they can handle caring for a baby. These feelings, called the postpartum blues, may come and go in the first few days or weeks after childbirth. Postpartum depression is having intense feelings of sadness, anxiety or despair that prevent you from being able to do your daily tasks. This depression can occur up to 1 year after having a baby but commonly starts about 1-3 weeks after childbirth. If you think you have postpartum depression please call the office as soon as possible at 338-8900.