



## POSTPARTUM INSTRUCTIONS

Women's Healthcare Group of Illinois

847-244-0222

[www.whcgofillinois.com](http://www.whcgofillinois.com)

### **Activity**

When you arrive home, it would be helpful if you limited your activities to taking care of the baby. This means that you should delegate household chores, cooking, etc., to others for the 1-2 weeks. Limit trips up and down stairs and do so at a leisurely rate. You should not lift anything heavier than the baby during the first week after delivery. You will require extra rest during the day for the first two weeks or so; therefore, morning and afternoon naps are suggested. You may resume riding in or driving a car when you feel comfortable if you are no longer taking narcotic pain medications and if you feel that you can make evasive maneuvers without causing yourself pain.

### **Bathing**

Continue taking Sitz baths three times a day for at least the first week after delivery. Tub bathing should be avoided until you've had your postpartum Doctors visit and been cleared to resume them.

### **Bleeding**

Postpartum bleeding is called lochia and it can last for as little as 2-3 weeks to as long as long 6-8 weeks. In the hospital your discharge is frequently bright red and heavy. However, by the time you go home, it has typically become more like menses. The flow will continue to slow down once home and the color will typically become darker before then becoming pink and finally a yellowish white. If however your discharge turns back to a bright red or if your flow increases, this is often a sign that you are doing too much and need to rest. If you are saturating more than a pad an hour, or if you are experiencing persistent or worsening abdominal pain, you should call the office immediately.

### **Bottle Feeding**

A certain amount of breast swelling is natural. We recommend that you use an Ace bandage wrapped tightly around the chest for 24 to 48 hours or until discomfort from breast engorgement has resolved. You also may apply ice packs to breasts for 20 minutes at a time, three to four times per day, for 24 to 48 hours. This will help to eliminate breast engorgement and pain. Avoid unnecessary direct stimulation of the breasts including hot showers, use of loose clothing and direct manipulation of the breasts. All of these things can increase milk production.

### **Breastfeeding**

A firm supportive nursing bra should be worn day and night. Avoid using soap directly on your nipples. Following a breastfeeding session, allow your nipple to air dry. The natural oil glands around the areola will keep the nipples soft and supple. Breast creams are not advised. Frequent feedings of 8 to 12 times in 24 hours help to prevent engorgement. Nipple soreness is expected for the first one to two weeks. If you experience any cracking or bleeding of the nipples, please call the office. Consultation with a lactation specialist available through our office.



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### **Clots**

Passing clots during the first two weeks postpartum is not uncommon. They can differ in size from the size of a pea to the size of a golf ball. If you are passing clots larger than golf balls or passing clots after two weeks postpartum, please call the office.

### **Constipation**

Try eating natural foods like prunes, prune juice, apple juice, apple cider, bran flakes or raisin bran. Increase your fluids, especially water. Avoid caffeine (colas, tea, coffee and chocolate). If a laxative is needed, take one ounce of Milk of Magnesia at bedtime.

### **Diet**

A well-balanced diet is necessary for the healing process. For a lactating mother, the normal caloric requirement is 2,000 calories or more per day. Your diet should especially include foods high in protein, such as meat, cheese, dairy products and eggs. Drink plenty of liquids, especially if breastfeeding. Increasing your fluid intake can also help to avoid constipation.

### **Episiotomy**

Your stitches will dissolve on their own. Do not be alarmed by a sticking or pulling sensation in the vaginal area during this time; it is entirely normal. Comfort measures include applying Witch Hazel, taking Sitz baths and a sensible and gradual increase in activity. You may take Ibuprofen or Tylenol as directed for discomfort.

### **Exercises**

You may begin exercising when the baby is four weeks old. If there is any pain with activity, you should stop. If you had a C-Section, avoid exercises involving direct use of the stomach muscles, such as sit-ups, etc., until your 6-week checkup.

### **Hemorrhoids**

To minimize discomfort, avoid standing or sitting for long periods of time. Take rest periods whenever possible during the day, lying on your left side with legs elevated on two pillows. Assuming the knee/chest position may also help to relieve pain. Do not allow yourself to become constipated. Drink plenty of water! Additionally, eat lots of green leafy vegetables and fiber. Taking Sitz baths will help. Using Preparation H® or Anusol HC® may also be helpful. Support hose are recommended because hemorrhoids result from compromised circulation and support hose improve increase circulation.



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### **Menstruation**

If your baby is bottle fed, you will probably resume menstruation four to ten weeks from the time of delivery. If you are breastfeeding, you may, but probably will not, have a period 3 months or longer after delivery. The first period may be heavier than your normal flow.

### **Newborn**

Questions Please call your pediatrician for all questions regarding your newborn or go to urgent care/Children's Hospital for any healthcare concerns.

### **Postpartum Depression**

Your postpartum period may be filled with various different emotions and you will probably have 1-3 days of "Baby Blues". However, if symptoms last longer than a week or are severe, please call for an appointment to discuss postpartum depression. Also see postpartum depression under pregnancy on our website.

### **Sexual Activity**

Intercourse is not advised for the first four weeks after delivery. After this, the healing may be sufficient and discharge lessened enough to permit comfortable sexual relations. K-Y Jelly or Replens, products sold over the counter, are suggested as a lubricant, since the vagina normally tends to be drier following delivery. Vaginal foam along with condoms should be used as a contraceptive until your four-week exam. Remember: Breastfeeding is not a form of birth control.

### **Temperature**

Take your temperature once daily in the evening for the first week after delivery. Notify the office if it is 100 degrees or higher.

### **Vitamins**

If breastfeeding, continue taking pre-natal vitamins for three months after you have weaned the baby. If bottle feeding, continue taking them for three months after delivery.



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### **When to Call Women's Healthcare Group of Illinois at 847-244-0222**



- If you are saturating more than a pad in an hour or experiencing a lot of pain with postpartum bleeding.
- If you are passing clots larger than golf balls or passing clots after two weeks postpartum.
- If your temperature is over 100 degrees.
- If symptoms of postpartum depression last longer than a week or are severe.