

POSTPARTUM INSTRUCTIONS

Congratulations on the birth of your baby. The following recommendations will help with your care and recovery in the postpartum period.

- Before discharge or as soon as possible after you return home, call the office to schedule your six-week postpartum visit. This appointment should be with the physician who delivered your baby. If you had a cesarean section, you will need to be seen at two weeks as well.
- It usually takes six to twelve weeks for your body to return to normal. This is a progressive process. You should feel stronger and better every day. The most important thing to remember is moderation in all activity.
 - Rest as much as possible especially in the first few weeks. **The importance of rest cannot be overemphasized.**
 - Try to avoid stairs if possible. If you must take stairs, do so as infrequently as possible.
- You can expect vaginal bleeding for up to six weeks. The flow is usually heavier and brighter immediately after delivery and gradually becomes lighter.
 - An increase in bleeding may indicate that you have been too active and should increase rest for the next day or two.
 - If you are not breastfeeding, you can expect your first period between four and eight weeks after delivery.
- You may shower or take a tub bath immediately if you had a vaginal delivery. You may wish to wait a week or two to take a tub bath if you had a cesarean delivery.
- You may take Tylenol or ibuprofen as needed for pain.
- Do not lift anything heavier than your baby for two weeks if you had a vaginal delivery, six weeks if you had a cesarean section.
- Eat a well balanced diet, drink plenty of fluid, and continue your prenatal vitamins. If you are breastfeeding, you will need a few more calories (500 calories/day) and more fluids.

- Keep the perineum (the area between the vagina and anus) clean and dry if you had a vaginal delivery. Rinse the area with a mild soapy solution after voiding or having a bowel movement. Pat dry with soft tissue.
- You should observe pelvic rest for six weeks. This means no intercourse, douching, or tampons.
- Avoid driving for at least two weeks if you had a cesarean section.
- If you experience constipation, try increasing the fiber in your diet (bran cereal, leafy green vegetables, fresh fruit, etc.). You may also take Colace, Fibercon, or Metamucil. For hemorrhoids, you can try over the counter medications such as Tucks, Preparation H, or Anusol.
- Limit visitors for the first few weeks. This is important for both you and your baby.
- Avoid strenuous exercise for six weeks. You may, after two weeks, enjoy moderate activity such as strolls (accompanied at first).
- Don't be surprised if you experience postpartum "blues" for a few days after coming home from the hospital. Your body is adjusting to lack of sleep and normal hormonal changes. Please call us if this feeling persists beyond two weeks.
- Call the office for any of the following:
 - Fever (persistent temperature of 100.4 or higher)
 - Excessive, heavy, or prolonged bleeding that does not respond to bed rest
 - Difficulties urinating
 - Abdominal pain
 - Worsening episiotomy pain unrelieved by sitz baths and Tylenol
 - Vaginal discharge that has a foul odor
 - Painful, red or swollen breasts
 - Redness, drainage or bleeding from a cesarean incision
 - Severe, prolonged, or restricting depression