



## POST-PARTUM INFORMATION – VAGINAL DELIVERY

### Activities

- For the first two days at home, rest as much as possible. Avoid lifting objects heavier than your baby. Gradually resume normal activities as you feel up to them. Do not hesitate to ask family and friends for assistance. There is nothing you are forbidden to do, but **get lots of rest!**
- **Heavy cramping and increased bleeding may be signs of overexertion** during the first few weeks postpartum. If these signs occur, **do not hesitate to call**. Often you will rebound with good rest and use of an NSAID (Ibuprofen 600mg every 6 hours).

### Nutrition

- If you are nursing or anemic, continue to take your prenatal vitamins until they are gone. Then use any over-the-counter multi-vitamin.

### Exercises

- Immediately post-partum you may begin **Kegel** exercises – 10 each time you put the baby to breast.
- After a week or so, begin with a few exercises each day and gradually build up on exercise time.
- We suggest starting with easy walking 10-15 minutes a day.

### Breastfeeding

- Nipple Tenderness:
  - This often develops during the first week of nursing.
  - In the first week, limit nursing to about 10-15 minutes per side, per feeding session.
  - Once your tenderness is gone and your baby establishes a more routine feeding schedule, you may nurse for longer.
- Refrain from Supplements:
  - Refrain from formula or sugar water unless directed by your baby's doctor.
  - Please feel free to call the office at any time to speak with our staff. They can help you over the phone and will gladly schedule a consultation with you at our office to give you hands-on help.
  - For additional help, call the lactation consultants at South Suburban Hospital at (708) 213-0818.
- Support Group
  - This group meets weekly on Wednesday mornings from 9:00 am – 10:30 am in the Meditation Room at South Suburban Hospital on the main level.
  - Moms sometimes lack the support they need to successfully breastfeed. Our peer support group offers guidance, information, and encouragement without judgement. Walk-ins are welcome!

### Breast Problems

- Engorgement
  - As the milk ducts fill, both breasts may become hard and somewhat tender. Frequent nursing and vegetable packs to the breasts are helpful.
- Mastitis
  - A breast infection can occur at any time while you are nursing. An infection is especially common when the breasts are not being emptied completely.
  - Symptoms usually affect one breast and include a red, tender, warm area of a breast.
  - You may also feel like you have the flu (fever, chills, aches, headache, fatigue).
  - Please call if you have these symptoms as antibiotics may be necessary to prevent this from progression to something more serious.

### Postpartum Check-Up

We would like all patients to make an appointment for a New Mom Check-Up about 7-10 days after your birth. We will address feeding issues, sleep issues, and just transition issues at this appointment. Additionally, make an appointment for around six weeks after your birth. Call early for a convenient time. Bring babies, pictures, and birth announcements to share if you wish.



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### Perineum

- Regardless of whether or not you have stitches, take a tub bath or a “sitz bath” daily for the first week postpartum. Analgesic pads (such as Tucks) may help with discomfort.
- **Do Kegel exercises daily!**
- **Avoid constipation** by drinking liquids and eating adequate roughage (uncooked fruits and vegetable, bran cereals, etc.). If necessary, use bulk laxatives (Metamucil).
- **Do not use tampons** – use sanitary pads or panty liners. Lochia (vaginal discharge) may increase once you get home but then usually decreases with time and changes in color from dark red to light pink and yellow.

### Afterbirth Pains

- Uterine cramping is quite common following the birth of the second and subsequent babies. The cramping usually subsides in the first few days and disappears by the end of the first week. It may occur with breastfeeding, but only for a short time.
- Try the following to decrease afterbirth pains:
  - Urinate often, especially before nursing
  - Ibuprofen 600mg as needed, especially 15-20 minutes before nursing
  - Lie on your stomach, if desired, for comfort
  - Use a heating pad or take a warm bath

### Postpartum Blues

Approximately 50% of women experience the “postpartum blues”, a period of time (often the 3rd to 8th day after the birth) characterized by emotional ups and downs. A woman typically feels “down”, might be easily upset, and/or might have bouts of crying for reasons she can't verbally express. Fortunately, this period doesn't usually last longer than 48 hours. If the feelings of depression last more than 2 weeks, can't sleep, experience uncontrollable crying, lose your appetite, or are overwhelmed by a sense of hopelessness/helplessness, please call us for help.

### Resuming Intimacy

We recommend resuming intercourse no sooner than 6 weeks after the delivery of your baby. Intercourse too soon may cause endometritis (uterine infection). Some suggestions for comfort when beginning intercourse again after a birth:

- Go slowly at first, try to relax beforehand (a warm bath)
- Find a comfortable position where you can control the speed and degree of penetration (woman on top, side lying)
- Try altering positions if one area of the perineum is particularly tender
- Use additional lubrication (KY Silky, Astroglide)
- Use birth control from the beginning if you do not wish to conceive again immediately.
- Condoms and spermicides are available without prescription and are effective for the postpartum period.

### Circumcision Check-Up

If your son has been circumcised, please make an appointment 7-9 days after the procedure.

### Call Us Anytime

Call us anytime for the following:

- Lots of bleeding (soaking a pad in 2 hours or less)
- Several large clots larger than a silver dollar
- Foul smelling vaginal discharge
- Afterbirth pains that are getting worse instead of better
- Fever greater than 100.4
- Sharp abdominal pain, pain in your legs, or shortness of breath
- Severe depression, and/or thoughts of harming yourself or your baby