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Postpartum Information

Caring for yourself

- If you are breastfeeding, consult your prenatal provider before taking medications. **Medications prescribed by your provider on discharge are safe for breastfeeding.**
- All mothers should continue to take prenatal vitamins.
- Constipation is very common after delivery. You may use stool softeners, laxatives, or milk of magnesia as needed. **All of these are over the counter.**
 - Fiber supplements: Metamucil, Hydrocil or Citrucel
 - Stool softeners (eg, docusate [Colace]).
 - Stimulant laxatives that contains senna (eg, ex-lax, Senokot) or bisacodyl (eg, Correctol, Doxidan, Dulcolax), or Milk of Magnesia.
- Constipation can be made worse by narcotic pain medications.
- Once the bowels begin to move, you may want to continue using a stool softener (eg, docusate [Colace]) or a non-stimulant laxative (eg, Miralax[®]/Glycolax[®]) on a daily basis to keep the stools soft. This treatment may be taken for as long as needed.
- **Most patient can tolerate pain with Ibuprofen 600mg taken every 6 hours, unless otherwise told not to by their provider. Over the counter Ibuprofen comes in 200mg (take 3 tablets to equal 600mg)**
- For hemorrhoids, you can use preparation H or Tucks pads (witch hazel) as needed.
- Your activity level should gradually increase. Avoid strenuous activity or exercise, and sexual intercourse.
 - If you had a cesarean delivery, avoid driving for at least 2 weeks, or as long as you are taking narcotic pain medications.
 - If you had a cesarean delivery, avoid lifting more than 10 pounds for 6 weeks, or any activity that causes you to strain your abdominal muscles.
 - If you had a cesarean delivery, it is okay to climb stairs 2-3 times a day in the first two weeks, and you can increase activity as tolerated after 2 weeks.
- Vaginal bleeding will wax and wane until 6-8 weeks after delivery. It is common to have an occasional gush, pass small clots, or pass a large clot 1-2 weeks after delivery.
- If you had a caesarian section, **remove your steristrips (band-aid stickers on your incision) 10 days after your surgery.**

- Avoid tampons, douching, tub baths, swimming, and intercourse for 6 weeks. If you have a vaginal tear and had stitches, you can use sitz baths or warm water soaks for comfort 2-3 times per day as needed. Pain and swelling can occur in this area and may worsen for the first 4-5 days after delivery. Continue to take ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) 600 mg every 6-8 hours as needed.
- If you are breast-feeding:
 - Infants in the first few weeks of life will feed 8-12 times or more in 24 hours. It is common for babies to feed every 2-3 hours for several hours then sleep for 3-4 hours at a time. Feedings may take 15-20 minutes on each side.
 - It is normal to experience hot flashes, vaginal dryness, and increased thirst while breastfeeding.
 - For more information or help with breast-feeding, go to **Kellymom.com**
- The “Baby Blues” is a common reaction that occurs in the days after delivery. Symptoms can include anxiety, crying for no reason, trouble sleeping, and irritability. The symptoms usually diminished by the 10th day.
 - Some new mothers experience more intense and prolonged symptoms such as depression, panic, anger, confusion, or fear of harming oneself or the baby. These may be signs of a temporary and treatable illness. Please notify your doctor immediately if you are experiencing these.

Call your prenatal provider if you have any concerns or any of the following:

- Heavy or bright red bleeding, passing clots or tissue, or soaking more than 2 pads per hour for more than 2 hours, or passing clots that are orange-sized or larger.
- Severe headaches, changes in vision, nausea, vomiting, or dizziness.
- Increasing pain or discomfort despite pain medications.
- Fever greater than 100.4°F or chills.
- Foul-smelling vaginal discharge.
- Increased pain or swelling at the vaginal repair site.
- If you have had a cesarean, drainage from your incision or spreading redness around your incision.
- Pain, redness, or firm area on the breast, especially if you have fevers or chills.
- Pain, redness, swelling, or warmth of the lower legs, or shortness of breath.
- Increasing urinary frequency, pain, or burning with urination.