

Postpartum Care Instructions

MOTHER

- **Keep your bladder empty.** Your bladder being full can keep your uterus from clamping down properly, and can cause you to hemorrhage. If you feel even the slightest urge to urinate, please get up and empty your bladder. In the first 24 hours postpartum, you should routinely go at least every three hours.
- **Monitor your uterus.** It should never be higher than your navel, and should feel firm and round, like a softball or large grapefruit.
- **Breastfeed on demand, keep your baby skin to skin constantly, and feel your uterus frequently,** if it is not **hard and round**, please rub it to keep it contracted and empty.
- **Eat well.** You are healing from the physical equivalent of a back to back marathon while making breastmilk AND taking care of a newborn (!), and you need to feed your body well to do all that at once! Eating well includes high protein, MANY fruits and vegetables, and whole grains.
- **Drink plenty of water.** Please drink at least one 8 ounce glass of water each time you breastfeed, plus one or two extra for good measure. You are not only healing tissues and replacing lost blood volume, you are also making milk!

Please avoid carbonated beverages (can irritate the urinary tract...which has already undergone some trauma, leading to a bladder infection) as well as drinks that contain high fructose corn syrup (an inflammatory agent, which can interfere with healing), and caffeine.

- The first time you get up is typically to go to the bathroom. First sit on the edge of your bed for a full three minutes. Then, with somebody staying with you continually, you may go to the bathroom.
- If you feel faint or your head feels funny (you get a letterbox of darkness around your line of sight, you hear ringing in your ears, you feel hot and flushed or cold and clammy), IMMEDIATELY go to the floor and lower your head. To your support person it may look as if you are having a seizure. They can put a cold wash cloth on the back of your neck and wrists and get you back to bed.
- Take your temperature every 6 hours. If you begin to run a fever (anything over 100.4) call me.
- It is normal for blood to pool when you lie down or sit, and then to have a small gush when you go more upright/stand. However, if you fill a pad in a half hour or less, call me immediately.
- Your Lochia (blood flow) should smell no different than a typical menstrual flow. If it develops a foul odor, call me.

- The first time you go down stairs you should have another adult walk in front of you and neither of you should carry the baby.

THE BABY

- In the first week of life, the baby should never sleep more than five hours at a time.
- **The baby should be breastfed on demand.** Demand starts with the newborn licking their lips, sucking on hands, and rooting. If you pay attention and feed the baby when they do these things, they will typically not get to the part where they have to cry to tell you they are hungry. **It is NORMAL for a breastfed newborn to want to nurse frequently.** Some babies want to eat as often as every half hour, but during the day they should not go longer than every 2-3 hours between feedings, and at night they should not go longer than 3-4 hours between feedings.
- The baby should not traumatize your nipples. **BREASTFEEDING, done properly DOES-NOT-HURT.** If your nipples are in pain, call me.
- **The baby should have at least one bowel movement and one urination in the first 24 hours of life.** In the second 24 hours of life, the baby should have an ADDITIONAL two poops and two pees. In the third 24 hours of life, the baby should have three more poops and three more pees. A “poop” counts if it is

silver dollar sized or bigger. If the baby has a HUGE full diaper you can count that as at least a few poops! After the first three days of life the baby should have 4-6 substantially wet diapers (disposable, or 6-8 cloth) and 4-6 substantial (again at least silver dollar sized) poops a day. If the baby is not pooping it means that they are not getting enough milk. That doesn't mean that you aren't MAKING enough milk, just that we have to work on latch. Call me.

- **The baby should never have a fever.** In a newborn, a fever is anything above 100.4 or BELOW 97 degrees despite efforts to warm the baby (the best way to warm the baby is to take their clothes off down to their diaper, get naked from your waist up, and put the baby to your chest, covering the both of you with plenty of blankets.
- **The baby should not be blue around the mouth after the first 12 hours.**
- **The baby should not breathe rapidly, EVER.** Rapid breathing would be anything more than 65 breaths per minute. Sometimes you may not notice rapidity, but a grunting sound instead. If you notice this, count the baby's breaths for a full minute.
- **It is normal for breastfed babies to become jaundiced, with the jaundice peaking from day 3-5.** However, if you notice that your baby is yellow in the first 24 hours of life, please call me immediately. If you do notice normal jaundice, you can put the baby in direct sunlight (within six inches of a window that

does not contain Argon or low-E gas) for ten minutes out of every hour.

Breastmilk causes jaundice to clear, as it contains a natural laxative, and the baby poops the bilirubin out. Be sure to nurse the baby before you put them in the sunlight and offer the breast again immediately afterward, to keep the baby from becoming dehydrated.

- **All babies can choke on mucous in the first 24 hours and should NEVER be left alone.** Most of the time they are able to work it up on their own. If your baby begins to turn blue, *hold the baby head down, rub gently down the spine from the bottom toward the head, and wipe away any mucous from the mouth immediately.* DO NOT SHAKE THE BABY or THUMP THE BABY ON THE BACK. Talk gently to the baby and encourage them. This continue off and on in spurts, for 3 to 30 minutes at a time, for the first 24 hours.

GENERAL RULES TO BE FOLLOWED FOR THE FIRST 72 HOURS

You should not attempt to go down/up stairs or take a shower/bath until you have first eaten, rested, and been up to the toilet without getting light headed or dizzy.

- **You should NEVER be left alone in the home without another adult present for 72 hours.**
- **You should not carry your baby up or down stairs for the first 48 hours.**

GUIDELINES FOR THE FIRST THREE WEEKS POSTPARTUM (your baby moon)

- **For the first week post partum you should stay in bed unless you are getting up to care for yourself (shower/toilet). The bed does not mean the couch...the bed is remote and quiet and gives you a chance to bond with the baby , establish a breastfeeding relationship, rest, and heal.**
- **Any company who comes must understand that you are healing, and bonding.**
If they are too modest to see you naked from the waist up, skin to skin with your baby and possibly breastfeeding, they should wait until the first three weeks post partum are past to pay their visit.
- **In the second week post partum, you should stay on or near the bed, in your jammies. Company still needs to understand that you are healing.** If they come to see you, it needs to be with the understanding that they 1)bring a meal, or 2)help out around the house (laundry, clean the bathroom, vacuum the floor) while they are there. They are not there for you to entertain them.
- **Company is not to hold the baby unless you are on the toilet or in the shower.**
You are at high risk for hemorrhage for the first two weeks post partum, and the best way to keep your uterus firm is to have the baby WITH YOU, skin to skin, while you rest. Baby should be with you while you nap, too. Hormone levels

are highest while you sleep, so the benefits of skin to skin are even important while you slumber! Schedule grandparents' visits when you need to bathe.

They will appreciate being able to "help" you and snuggle the new little member of the family.

- **The third week you should remain on the bed or couch, still skin to skin with the baby as much as possible.**
- **You should not lift anything heavier than the baby.**
- **DO NOT return to cleaning floors or any other heavy housework.**
- **In the third week, IF you feel like helping out,** you may do simple tasks like having a basket of clothes brought to you and folding them.
- **Rest when the baby is sleeping.** The more you rest, the more quickly you will heal.
- **Avoid reaching and stretching over your head.**
- **Take this time to get to know the new member of your family and to spend quiet time with your other children.**
- **Remember that it is physically impossible to spoil a newborn!** Your baby does not have the cognitive capability to manipulate you. **To survive a newborn must be held close.** They better regulate their temperature, their respiration rate, their blood sugar, and their oxygen saturation when they are skin to skin with their mother. When a newborn cries and their needs are not met, they only learn hopelessness, not to "soothe" themselves. They have no idea how to soothe, they just go into a deeper than normal sleep to avoid the pain of being alone.
- **Do not drive a car for two weeks.**

CALL ME ANYTIME DAY OR NIGHT IF:

- **Your uterus is too high.**
- **You fill a pad with blood in a half hour or less.**
- **You have any chest pains or difficulty breathing.**
- **Your baby turns blue.**
- **Your baby is breathing rapidly.**
- **Your baby has no bowel movements or wet diapers.**
- **Either you or the baby develop a fever.**

- You have any questions or concerns in regards to the well being of mother or baby.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:
