

# POSTPARTUM

## Instructions

### Quick Guide For Baby

- **Breastfeed** whenever the baby wants or every 2-3 hours; don't wait longer than 4 hours.
- **Breaths** can be irregular as your baby learns to breath. Quick breaths may be followed by pauses of breathing. Most important is to watch for chest retraction or blueness around the mouth. Report these immediately.
- **Temperature** is greatly affected by clothing and environment. If you feel you need to, check under the armpit. It should be between 96.6 and 98.6°F. Call immediately if it is abnormal after adjusting clothing or room temperature.
- **Diapers**, the first poop will be dark and black and should occur within the first 48 hours. Baby should have a wet diaper within the first 24 hours.
- **Cord care** - keep it dry and exposed to air. Swelling, constant wetness, leaking of blood or meconium is not normal.
- If **skin** starts to appear **yellow** in the first 24 hours, call immediately.
- If you feel that your baby is acting funny, lethargic, or upset for no reason, call immediately.

### For mom:

- **Have someone with you the first few times you get up in case you get dizzy.**
- **Call immediately if you have a fever (temperature over 100.6°F), foul smelling discharge, or uterine tenderness. These are signs of infection.**
- **Call immediately if you have leg or calf pain with tenderness; localized hot spots, redness or swelling, with or without visible varicose veins.**

### Letting your womb heal

#### Your uterus has just worked very hard!

- Check for firmness regularly and before getting out of bed. It should feel like a grapefruit and shouldn't be above your belly button. Massage your uterus until it is firm. If you feel extreme tenderness this is a sign of infection- call immediately.
- **Afterpains** increase with each child. *Keeping your bladder empty* will help relieve this. "AfterEase" tincture will help with this. You may also take 800mg Ibuprofen every 6 hours.
- **Nursing frequently** is important to maintain uterine firmness and prevent too much bleeding.
- **Watch for too much bleeding.** If you soak more than 2 pads in one hour, call immediately. If blood is pouring out continuously, go straight to the hospital and call me to meet you there.
- You can continue to take your alfalfa to help decrease your blood flow.
- It's normal to pass **small clots** or to have **small gushes of blood** in the first 24 hours, especially when you get up. If you have any clots that are larger than a lemon or any bleeding

that concerns you, call immediately.

- The spot that your placenta was attached to is like a wound that has scabbed over. Overactivity “picks” at that scab and reopens the wound. **Please rest and allow your womb to heal!**
- As it heals, **your bleeding** will transition from red to brown to creamy white. There should be no foul odor. Some women take the entire 6 weeks to stop bleeding, but resting will shorten the duration.
- Do not lift heavy things for the first week. (This includes toddlers!) Avoid activities that cause the pelvis to jerk or shift rapidly for the first couple of weeks.

## Breastfeeding

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- Nurse your baby as frequently as she wants. This builds a healthy milk supply. For the first 36 to 48 hours you will only produce small amounts of colostrum, which is all your baby needs. Do not supplement with water or other fluids.
- If you become engorged when your milk comes in, apply warm compresses and hand express some of the milk to make nursing more comfortable. Be careful not to let your breasts stay full as this can cause an infection called mastitis. If you experience flu-like symptoms and red patches on the breast, call immediately.
- **Do not let your baby latch incorrectly.** Follow these steps:
  - Place baby’s tummy directly on your tummy.
  - Bring the baby to the breast, not the breast to the baby.
  - Bop the baby in the nose with your nipple, and he will lift his head to look up, opening his mouth.
  - Swiftly bring the baby’s head onto the breast, with the nipple pointing at the roof of the mouth. The lips should be flanged out. You can pull down on the baby’s chin with your finger to get a bigger opening and better latch.
- Some nipple tenderness is normal, but it shouldn’t hurt all the way through a feeding. Apply vitamin E oil or Lansinoh ointment between feedings. Expose your nipples to air after feedings.
- Remember that breastfeeding can be very challenging at first. Each day your baby (and her mouth!) gets a little bigger and her head stronger. Do not hesitate to call if you are feeling discouraged.

## Personal Care

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- Your perineum may be swollen and sore for the first day. Ice packs are only recommended for use during the first 24 hours.
- Brew a large batch of sitz bath and pour this into your peri bottle to spray on your bottom every time you visit the bathroom. This will greatly enhance your postpartum experience! Alternatively, warm

water with a couple drops of lavender essential oil is also wonderful. Do not wipe with toilet paper, except for with a bowel movement. Just dap dry after using the peri bottle.

- Change your pad every time you go to the bathroom, Do not put anything inside your vagina-no tampons or cups. Avoid scented pads, as these will irritate your perineum.
- If you have stitches or an un-repaired tear, remember to keep your knees together when getting in and out of bed. Do not sit cross legged and try to avoid stair climbing. In these situations, it is especially important to use the herbal sitz bath.
- Continue to eat fresh, whole foods in plentiful amounts. Avoid constipating foods. Drink plenty of clear liquids, preferably water or herbal tea, while you are breastfeeding. This will also help avoid constipation.
- If you do find that you are constipated, drink prune juice or black cherry juice. Eat plenty of fiber. Remember to stay calm and go when you have the urge. Sometimes it helps to stand over the toilet if you are worried about tears or stitches.
- Remember the postpartum motto: “One week in the bed, one week on the bed, one week around the bed.” Stay in bed for the first few days, even if you are feeling great. Open a window in your room, play music, light candles and enjoy your baby-moon! You can quickly degenerate during this time. After the first few days you may move about the house and rest on the couch or sit outside. Focus on breastfeeding your baby and healing your womb.

## Baby Care

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Your baby will not need a bath immediately. Rub all the vernix into her skin. Once he starts spitting up is a good time to start bathing rituals.

Fingernails can be kept short by filing, but cutting them is not recommended. They are very thin and it is easy to make them bleed.

Blocked tear ducts should be massaged by gently pressing inside the bridge of the nose from the inner corner of the eye. Stroke upward, then down ward toward the nostril. You might see mucous in the corner of the eye as it is dislodged. Do this several times a day. Warm compresses of chamomile tea bags are a comforting addition to this treatment- they help avoid eye infections.

Your baby will probably like sleeping on you or close to you. Remember that she was inside of you for 9 months and has only begun her journey to extra-uterine life. She is still very much a part of you. Bed-share safely by using a firm mattress and keep pillows and blankets away from your baby’s face. Do not bed-share if you have been smoking or using alcohol or other drugs. Alternatively you might find that a bassinet placed next to you bed works well for both of you.

Do not leave your baby to cry. He is physically unable to soothe himself and has a physiological and psychological need to be held. Responding to your baby’s cries creates a nurturing and trusting relationship that will last throughout his childhood.