



## Postpartum Care and Tips

**Mother-Care - have an adult with you for first 24-48 hrs (call or text with ANY concerns):**

- Postpartum Bleeding:
  - The largest amount of bleeding occurs the first 24 hours.
  - Soaking a large pad from end to end in less than 30 minutes is too much bleeding. You will be instructed on how to contract your uterus to keep it firm and below your belly button. (Rubbing, nursing, urinating, etc)
  - You will experience period-like bleeding (lochia) for up to 6 weeks. It may stop well before 6 weeks. Please report any foul odor.
  - You will likely feel a gush of blood and cramping while nursing or changing positions.
  - The bleeding will be heavy, then taper off over the next several weeks
  - Your bleeding will alert you if you are “over-doing” it. If blood tapers, then reappears heavier and redder, please rest and take it easy.
  - Please report any clots that are the size of a lemon or larger. Passing smaller clots is normal.
- Afterbirth Contractions:
  - If this is your 2<sup>nd</sup> baby (or more), your afterbirth pains may be more intense
  - These may last up to 3 days
  - Options for managing the pain:
    - Empty your bladder often
    - Nurse the baby often
    - Herbal tinctures: motherwort, Crampbark, red raspberry leaf, or others
    - After you urinate, lie down on your belly with a pillow on your uterine area for 5 min.
    - Ibuprofen; 800mg every 6 hours (no more than 3200mg per day!)
- Keep legs together while healing for 2 weeks.
- When getting out of bed, “log roll” so you avoid using your abdominal muscles.
- While in bed or sitting, do not scoot on your bottom. Lift and shift your bottom, or crawl on hands and knees on the bed to find a comfortable position.
- Use cold pads for swelling/cooling for first 48 hours.
  - Prepare cold pads by dipping each one in postpartum herbal bath tea, then place in freezer. Each herb packet may be steeped twice. Steeping overnight is best.
- Use warm pads after first 48 hours for circulation and healing.
- When using the toilet:
  - Walk with assistance to the toilet.
  - Prepare the peri-bottle containing warm water and 5 drops of postpartum herbal tincture, or ½ of the bottle with the herbal bath tea, ½ warm water, and 5 drops of the tincture.
  - Squirt the solution over vagina, labia, and perineum after urinating.
  - Pat dry when you choose to use toilet paper.
  - When you poop, wipe anus only from near perineum toward the back.
  - Use mesh panties for first several days (they may be washed).
  - Place cold pad in mesh panties (DO NOT REMOVE ADHESIVE TABS. This will ruin the mesh underwear), and layer witch hazel wipes on top (layer cold pads if bleeding is heavy).
- Soak 2 times daily in a postpartum herbal bath for the first week. Preparation:
  - Have someone bring a stock pot full of water just to a boil.
  - Turn off heat and place herbal packet (from home birth kit) into the water and cover with a lid.
  - Let steep 1-2 hours or over-night.
  - Dump contents of stock pot into bath water.
  - Soak for 15 minutes.

- Nutrition:
  - Eat nutritious foods and drink plenty of water to build and maintain a good breastmilk supply
  - Continue taking all of your prenatal supplements and herbs, unless noted otherwise
- REMAIN IN BED OR SITTING AROUND THE HOUSE FOR AT LEAST 3 DAYS
  - Give yourself permission to lounge around the house to encourage proper recovery and future pelvic health for TWO full weeks of recovery – no long walks. Refer to postpartum exercise sheet.
  - Allow those around you to serve you.
  - Arrange for help for 1-2 weeks with the house, meals, and any older children.
  - No excessive standing.
  - Rest together and enjoy your new family member. 😊
- Activity:
  - You may shower or bathe with an adult in the room with you when you are ready. An adult must be present so that you don't faint.
  - Get plenty of rest, and consider limiting visitors for the first week. Please do not feel like you have to host others – have them serve you and bring you a nutritious meal.
  - Avoid excessive stair climbing – only a few times per day
- Wear your postpartum belt for 4-6 weeks.

CALL 314-374-8901 IMMEDIATELY IF:

- You soak a large pad (end to end) in less than 30 min
- Pass a clot that is fist sized or larger
- Fever of 101°F or greater that persists over 24 hours
- Any questions about the baby, or if baby appears sick. If baby is unresponsive or has blue lips, face or trunk, call 911 immediately
- Red, hot, sore and painful area on the breast, especially with flu-like symptoms
- Swollen, red, hot and painful area on your leg that is tender to the touch
- Unusual or foul smelling vaginal bleeding
- Feelings of overwhelming anxiety or depression.
- Rapid heart rate, difficulty breathing, or inability to sleep or eat

Baby-Care:

- ♥ CALL OR TEXT WITH ANY CONCERNS.
- ♥ Skin-to-skin will help regulate your baby's temperature over the next few weeks. It's also easier. 😊
- ♥ Nursing:
  - Hold your baby tummy-to-tummy.
  - Baby's nose aligned with your nipple.
  - Allow your baby to reach for the breast with a wide, open mouth. Head will be tilted back slightly, just as we drink from a glass.
  - Give your baby as much of your breast as possible to avoid nipple pain.
  - Your baby's lips should be flanged out.
  - Detach with your finger immediately if you are experiencing any pain. Latch again. Repeat as necessary to protect your nipples. 😊
  - Nurse your baby as often as possible, at least every 2 hours. Newborns nurse very often – around 10-12 times in a 24 hour period. Their stomachs are small and breastmilk digests easily. They are also growing very quickly in the beginning and need the calories from your milk. Your baby is hungry if:
    - She wakes up.
    - Thrusts his tongue.
    - She sucks her hand.
    - He "pecks" on your chest or shoulder.
    - She turns her face and opens her mouth to take a breast.
    - He salivates.

- Skin-to-skin is encouraged for at least the first several days.
- To wake the baby after 3-4 hours of sleeping:
  - Skin-to-skin contact
  - Rub her feet
  - Stroke his head
- Your mature milk should come in within 2-5 days after birth. Your baby will likely nurse more often (perhaps seem insatiable) right before your mature milk comes in. You may experience breast tenderness and engorgement.
- ♥ Sleep:
  - First stretch of sleep for a new baby is around 5-6 hours. After that, the baby should wake to nurse every 3-4 hours.
  - If your baby is difficult to wake up, try skin-to-skin.
- ♥ It is possible for your baby to be over-bundled. If this happens, unwrap your baby and place him skin-to-skin. Cover parent and baby with a cotton blanket. Cotton clothing for the baby will allow more air flow.
- ♥ To check baby's temperature you may do it, under the baby's arm with a standard thermometer (don't forget to ADD a degree), or use a digital temp scanner.
- ♥ If baby's temperature reaches 99.3°F or higher, contact us right away.
- ♥ Diapering:
  - Please be sure to avoid contact between the diaper and the umbilical stump. Fold the diaper if necessary.
  - Baby should pee once or twice within the first 24 hours, 2 times the second day, 3 times the third day, or more. If you are unsure, place a square of toilet paper in the diaper near their genitals – this way you can see if it's wet.
  - Rub oil liberally on your baby's bottom, folds, cracks, labia folds, and scrotum while he or she is expelling meconium. It will help with clean up. ☺
  - Do not retract the foreskin on an uncircumcised baby boy – inform friends and family of the same
  - Sometimes boys pass "brick dust" or uric acid crystals in their diaper when they pee (rust colored spots) – this is normal within the first 24 hours
  - Baby girls sometimes have blood spots in their diapers from the hormones of pregnancy – this is normal and will go away on its own
- ♥ Cord Care:
  - Your baby's umbilical stump will dry and fall off on its own. No peroxide or alcohol necessary. You may clean the area with warm water and cotton swab.
  - It may fall off within 7-10 days.
  - The umbilical stump might become red and stinky just before it falls off. This is normal. If you are concerned, drop a bit of breast milk on it to facilitate healing.
  - Do not submerge your baby in water until the umbilical stump has fallen off. Sponge baths are the best way to clean your baby during this time.
  - Contact your midwife if the stump looks infected, red, bleeding or swollen.
- ♥ Baby's Skin (Jaundice):
  - Take a look at your baby's skin by a window with the sun shining in within the first 24 hours. If it has a yellow tint, please give us a call. A good way to check is by pressing the baby's nose and look at the color of the skin when you release your finger
  - Babies may develop normal/physiologic jaundice from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> day of life. It may peak in color by day 10 and resolve on its own with ample breastfeeding and excretion (pee and poop).
- ♥ Breathing:
  - New babies may sneeze, gag, cough, hiccup, and expel mucus.
  - Breathing is often erratic – rapid for a few seconds, long pauses between breaths
  - If baby is having a hard time breathing – rapid breathing, deep chest movements, call us right away