

Postpartum Patient Guide

The delivery of your baby has finally occurred. Congratulations! You have now entered the final part of your pregnancy referred to as the postpartum or recovery period. The postpartum time is generally 6 weeks for a vaginal delivery and 8 weeks for a cesarean section delivery.

During the next few weeks your body will be going through both physical as well as psychological changes. Your doctor has some general guidelines for you to follow:

1. Rest is important. Your body has just gone through some big changes and fatigue is not uncommon. It is important for you to sleep when the baby is sleeping. In the first 2 weeks, this rest time is especially important. Remember, babies eat about every 2 hours day and night.
2. Bleeding is common for about 2-6 weeks. This is a sign that the uterus is healing. Initially it will be like a heavy period and eventually it will become lighter. However, at 2 weeks a heavy bleed may occur for about 24 hours. This is due to healing at the site where your placenta attached to the uterus. After this, the bleeding should become light again. If your activity level is too much, your bleeding will increase. Please remember to listen to your body. Call the office if bleeding continues to be heavy and you're passing large clots.
3. Emotions will be changing frequently. We want to reassure you and your family that you are not going crazy. Hormones are changing in your body and this can cause you to be excited and overjoyed at one moment and crying the next. This will get better as time goes by and remember fatigue can also make you very emotional. Please rest.
4. Feeding your baby is a whole new challenge. Whether you have chosen to breast feed or bottle feed, this is a time of learning. Please remind yourself to be patient. Listen to your baby doctor's advice. Breast-feeding can be uncomfortable for the first two weeks. It will get easier and less painful as time goes on. Please call if you have questions or problems. We can help make the transition time easier. The pain medication your doctor gave you is perfectly OK to use while nursing.
5. Your activities during the next 6 weeks will also be limited while your body is healing. You should not lift more than the baby during the next 4 weeks. You should not be lifting laundry baskets, groceries etc. No sexual activity and do not put tampons in the vagina for the next 6 weeks.

Warning Signs to Call:

- Heavy bleeding with large clots or severe cramping
- Redness or pain at the incision site
- Fever above 100° F
- Difficulty coping, uncontrolled crying, inability to sleep

Helpful Hints:

- Accept help from family and friends
- Limit visitors for a few weeks so you can rest
- Share feelings with your significant other
- Try to get out of the house every few days for a walk or an outing
- Allow your partner or significant other to help with the baby's care

Next Appointment:

- Please call the office to schedule a follow-up visit at 6 weeks with your doctor.