

MATERNAL POST-DISCHARGE CARE INSTRUCTIONS

You have been discharged after the birth of your baby. If you have questions or concerns about yourself, please call your OB provider. Especially if your bleeding worsens or your pain is unrelieved by the pain medications ordered.

For general information feel free to call us at the Edgewood Mother/Baby unit @ (859) 301-2360.

Our Lactation Consultants can schedule an appointment and/or provide additional assistance for breastfeeding questions or concerns. Weight checks are offered at the Lactation office Monday - Saturday between 1-2 pm. The Lactation Office is located next to the Mother/Baby Unit. Please call 859-301-2631 for any needs. Leave a message and someone will call you back.

It is important to follow the maternal care and discharge instructions below.

Important Instructions

- Showers only. Do not immerse yourself in water. No bathtubs, swimming pools or hot tubs.
- No lifting greater than 10 lbs. until seeing your OB care provider.
- No driving x 2 weeks.
- Nothing in your vagina. No tampons or douching.
- No sex/intercourse.
- Resume activities slowly. Be sure to take steps slowly.
- If pain intensifies or is unrelieved with medications ordered, call your doctor. If you have problems related to your current illness/procedure or if your symptoms persist or worsen, please contact your doctor.
- REMEMBER TO CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR FOR A FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT AS INSTRUCTED.

Diet - CONTINUE PREADMISSION DIET UNLESS OTHERWISE DIRECTED.

IV Sites - notify your doctor for any extreme redness or observed drainage from any old iv site.

Signs and Symptoms of a Wound Infection - CALL YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THESE:

1. Drainage from incision that looks like pus – thick green or yellow.
2. Redness of warmth around, or red streaks coming from the incision.
3. Swelling around incision.
4. Tenderness or pain around incision that seems to get worse.
5. Temperature greater than 100.5 degrees or less than 97 degrees.
6. Any gaping or opening of the incision.
7. Other general signs of infection are headache, muscle aches, dizziness, chills, or general ill feeling.

ACTIVITY - Gradually increase your **activity as tolerated**. If it makes you tired, sore, or bleed more, you are doing too much too soon. Rest as much as you can. **You may climb steps but do so slowly and limit the number of trips up and down in a day. For 2 weeks do not lift anything heavier than 10 pounds. If you had a Cesarean Section, avoid lifting for 6 weeks.**

BABY BLUES - Withdrawal of the pregnancy hormones, as well as fatigue from lack of sleep, can affect the way you feel. Beginning within the first few days after delivery, you may experience irritability, impatience and crying. This is normal. **Call your doctor if these feelings worsen or last longer than 2-3 weeks as it could indicate postpartum depression.**

BLEEDING - During the first few days after delivery your vaginal discharge will be dark red and like your menstrual flow. After that, the discharge will continue to decrease in amount and change to a pale pink or brownish color. By the end of their second week most women will have little more than a clear discharge, which may continue for several weeks. A heavier flow during breastfeeding or when you first get out of bed is normal. **Call your doctor if you experience heavy, bright red bleeding (enough to saturate on maxi pad in less than an hour) or if you are passing clots that are increasing in size and frequency.**

CONSTIPATION - Your first bowel movement usually occurs within 2-3 days after delivery. Progressive exercise, a high fiber diet (fruits, vegetables, and whole grains) and plenty of fluids (especially water) will help prevent constipation. Over-the-counter stool softeners may be used, if needed.

CRAMPING - Afterpains result from the uterus contracting after delivery, which helps reduce blood loss and returns the uterus to its pre-pregnancy size. They are most noticeable in the first 3-4 days following delivery, particularly for women who have had previous deliveries. These contractions are also more pronounced during breastfeeding. Anti-inflammatory medications (such as Advil, Ibuprofen or Motrin) usually provide effective relief from afterpains.

DIET - Unless instructed otherwise, **eat a regular, well-balanced diet** and include foods high in protein and iron. **Drink plenty of fluids.**

DRIVING - **Avoid driving for 1-2 weeks after delivery.** If you are still having pain that would prevent you from reacting quickly in case of an emergency, you should not be driving. **Do not drive if you are taking narcotic pain medication (such as Percocet).**

BREAST PAIN - **Call your doctor if either breast develops a hard area that becomes red, hot, or tender and is accompanied by flu-like symptoms and fever.**

ENGORGEMENT - Swelling of the breasts may occur 2-4 days after delivery and usually lasts 24-48 hours. If you are bottle feeding: Wear a tight bra 24 hours a day until the engorgement has passed. Avoid any nipple stimulation during this time. Apply ice packs to each breast for 10-15 minutes, 3-4 times a day as needed. You may also take Tylenol as directed for discomfort.

If you are breastfeeding: Massage the breast through a cold, wet cloth until the breast softens. You may need to pump or manually express some milk before each feeding if the nipple is too tight to allow the baby to latch on. Massaging breasts in a warm shower may also help to

express milk. Continue to nurse frequently. Apply ice packs after breastfeeding for 10-15 minutes to decrease swelling and relieve discomfort.

NIPPLES - Sore nipples are generally due to poor latch-on and improper positioning during breastfeeding. Dab either expressed colostrum or breast milk to your nipple and allow to air dry or apply a small amount of Lanolin or Lansinoh to your nipple after breastfeeding. Remember to break the suction between your baby's mouth and your breast by sliding your finger into the corner of his/her mouth.

FEVER - Call your doctor if you have a temperature above 100.4 degrees. It could be a sign of infection in your urinary tract, breast, uterus, or abdominal incision.

HEMORRHOIDS - Hemorrhoids are best treated with sitz baths, cold compresses, topical anti-inflammatory (Hydrocortisone cream, and Witch Hazel (Tucks) pads). Avoid constipation to prevent straining against them.

INCISIONAL CARE - If you had a Cesarean Section, clean your incision daily using soap and water. Pat dry, don't rub. Look at your incision every day. **Call your doctor if there is any redness in the skin around the incision, pus-filled drainage, or separation of the wound edges.** Any stitches you have will dissolve on their own. You can remove steri strips 7 days after they were placed.

PERINEUM - To keep your bottom clean continue to use your squirt bottle to rinse the area with lukewarm water after urination and bowel movements. Dry the area using a front to back patting motion. Use your anesthetic (Dermoplast) spray for pain relief and the topical anti-inflammatory (Hydrocortisone) cream 3-4 times a day as needed. Witch Hazel (Tucks) pads are cooling and soothing and can be applied to the area as often as desired. Change your pads frequently to avoid infection. Any stitches you may have will dissolve on their own.

PREECLAMPSIA - High blood pressure brought on by pregnancy can continue into the postpartum period. Call your doctor if you experience headaches, dizziness or visual changes (such as blurred vision, spots, or flashing lights).

SITZ BATHS - Sitz baths promote healing and provide relief from the pain and swelling associated with episiotomies, tears, or hemorrhoids. This can be done 2-3 times a day for 15-20 minutes at a time using plain, comfortable hot water.

SMOKING - Smoking is hazardous to your health. Second-hand smoke is harmful to those around you. Contact your doctor for smoking cessation information and classes that can help you quit.

URINATION - Call your doctor if you have trouble urinating (such as burning, frequency with small amounts, or feeling like you are not emptying your bladder) with or without fever.

UTERINE INFECTION - The site where the placenta was attached is a healing wound. To prevent infection, avoid introducing bacteria into the vagina - no tub baths, sex, tampons or douching until after your postpartum visit. Call your doctor if you experience increased abdominal tenderness, fever or a foul-smelling vaginal discharge.

WORKING - If you work outside the home, **return to work as instructed by your doctor**, usually after your 6-week check-up.

CALL YOUR DOCTOR if you have a fever, excessive bleeding, breast pain with flu-like symptoms, pain with urination, foul-smelling discharge, leg pain, shortness of breath or persistent depression.