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Post-Partum Information

We would like to congratulate you on the birth of your baby. Unless your doctor has instructed you otherwise, here are some guidelines and information for your home care.

1. Your rest is important! Rest during the day when your baby sleeps. Limit visitors. Taking care of yourself and your baby is a big job. Do not expect to be a "Super Mom". Ask family members and friends to help you.

2. A healthy, well balanced diet, which includes fresh fruits and vegetables, should be eaten every day. You will heal faster and have more energy to care for yourself and your family.

3. Drink 8-10 glasses of fluid each day. This is especially important if you are breastfeeding.

4. Continue your prenatal vitamins as directed by your doctor.

5. Your baby needs to eat every 2-3 hours or on demand. For breastfeeding mothers, continue to use the various positions taught by the nursing staff and breastfeeding educators. A good, supportive, well-fitting bra should be worn. Several insurance companies will provide you with a breast pump with a prescription from your physician. Electric breast pumps are also available for rent or purchase. Check with your nurse or local pharmacy for resources. You may also call 1-800-835-5968 for breastfeeding information.

For formula feeding mothers, the same formula started in the hospital is usually continued. Increase the amount based on the baby's demand. Any change in formula should be discussed with pediatrician. To limit milk production in the first few days, bind the breasts with an ACE wrap. Remove the wrap daily to shower. For further information, consult your doctor or childbirth/ breastfeeding educator.

6. Continue your perineal care (peri-care) with warm water after going to the bathroom. Pat dry. Change your sanitary napkins with each trip to the bathroom. Sitz baths (warm, running water) may be taken 3-4 times daily if stitches or hemorrhoids are painful. The stitches will absorb in 10-12 days and do not need to be removed.

7. Do not douche or use tampons for six weeks after delivery.

8. Kegel exercises will help to promote healing and improve muscle tone. "Kegels" are done by squeezing the vaginal muscles together, as if you are trying to stop the flow of urine. Do these exercises several times per day.

9. Try not to strain to move your bowels. If you do, splint or hold the episiotomy with a clean sanitary pad. Be sure to wipe yourself from front to back. You may need to take a stool softener or laxative.

10. Avoid sexual intercourse until after your post partum check-up. You can become pregnant without a return to your normal menstrual cycle. Every woman is different.

11. Notify the doctor of: (1) Fever, 100.4 orally or greater (2) Burning on urination (3) Excessive bleeding, more than a heavy menstrual flow (4) Swelling redness and/or tenderness in one or more areas of the breasts or legs (5) Foul smelling

vaginal drainage (6) Redness, swelling and/or drainage from your abdominal incision or episiotomy stitches (7) Excessive pain.

12. Cesarean Delivery: Keep your abdominal stitches clean and dry. Shower daily. Carefully cleanse your incision with soap and water. Pat dry with a towel. Please make sure that your incision stays dry throughout the day or you may have an increased risk of infection. If clips or staples are used they will be removed before you go home or at your first doctor's office visit.

13. Walking is the best exercise for you. Hard or tiring exercise is not good for the first six weeks. Over activity may cause bleeding.

14. Your doctor will tell you when you may resume driving your car. You may take short rides and resume light housekeeping activities after delivery. Try not to do too much - your first weeks at home should be devoted to you and your new baby!

15. Most mothers report feeling very sad and/or tired from time to time the first few weeks. This is normal. If these feelings interfere with caring for yourself or the baby, please call your doctor or childbirth educator.

16. Your desire for sexual intimacy will depend on your physical health, emotional state, and your (and your partners) feelings about adjusting to your new lifestyle. Share you needs and desires, as well as your concerns.

17. When you get home, call your doctor's office and make an appointment for your post partum check-up. Birth control information will be discussed at this visit. Returning to work will also be discussed.