



Postpartum Instructions for Mom

5 B's of Postpartum: These 5 activities will be your repeating cycle for the first 2 or 3 days.

- Bladder: keep it empty
- Belly: rub it before you nurse
- Bottle & Bite: water and food every time you nurse your baby
- Breastfeed: your baby
- Back: to sleep for both of you

To learn more about each of these key instructions, and some additional health and safety information, read below.

Congratulations on the birth of your precious baby! And, welcome to what we call the "4th trimester". This phase of your "new normal" will include a lot of changes and possibly some challenges. We want to provide you with some guidelines and instructions to help you have a safe, healthy postpartum period.

Rest: Birth is hard work! Rest will help you recover more quickly. Stay in bed with your baby for the first week and do nothing except take care of your baby. Do not lift anything heavier than your baby. After the first week, you can gradually add back in your normal activities, but use wisdom. Sleep when your baby sleeps. Allow other people to prepare meals, do housework, laundry and care for older children. Taking care of yourself and the baby now will make it easier for you to resume a more normal schedule very soon.

Perineal Care: Use your peribottle filled with warm water to rinse your perineum while you are urinating and/or rinse your perineum after using the restroom. Pat dry (avoid wiping). Ice packs may be soothing and can help reduce pain and swelling. Wear them for 20-30 minutes every hour. If you have any kind of laceration, keep your legs together to help facilitate healing.

Nutrition and Hydration: In addition to recovering from birth, your body is working to produce more colostrum and begin the transition to mature milk. Maintain your pregnancy diet and supplements, as well ADD an additional 500 calories every day to your diet. Stay well hydrated and eat a healthy diet with a variety of fresh foods and plenty of healthy fats, whole grains, fruit and vegetables. Good nutrition will help you recover quickly and thoroughly.

Uterus and bleeding: Your uterus should be firm and no higher than your belly button. Massage your uterus at least every 4 hours to keep your bleeding minimized. Expect a heavy bleeding for the first 12-24 hours. It will gradually slow down and become darker in color and less in amount over the next 2-3 weeks. You may have clots, especially after you've been laying down. You should not soak more than 1 pad per hour. If you are bleeding too much, do 3 things, all starting with "B" . . . rub your "belly"; empty your "bladder", "breastfeed" your baby. If you fill a menstrual pad in less than 20 minutes, or if you have gushing blood that seems like a hemorrhage, call 911, lay down, rub your belly, and breastfeed your baby until help arrives.

Elimination: Your bladder may feel numb for about the first 24 hours after birth. Make a habit of attempting to empty your bladder every 2 hours, even if you don't feel the urge. Keeping your bladder empty will minimize postpartum bleeding and cramping. Let me know if you have any difficulty urinating or having a bowel movement.

Pain Relief: The first choice for pain relief is ice. Over the counter remedies may be helpful for hemorrhoid relief. Frozen bags of peas work well for ice packs on your breasts if they are sore. Ibuprofen may help with both pain relief and swelling. Tylenol may help with pain relief and is generally considered safe. Afterease and/or Arnica are excellent supplements to have on hand should your afterpains be stronger than you are expecting.

Breast Care: Do not use alcohol, soap or drying agents on the nipples. If your nipples are sore or breastfeeding is painful, it may be a sign of poor positioning or an ineffective latch. Use pure lanolin cream or a pure healing salve on your nipples after each feeding if you are sore. Call me so we can help troubleshoot solutions. Breastfeeding may be uncomfortable for the first several days, but it should not be extremely painful for any extended period of time.

Exercise: While you are in bed for this first few days be sure to do what we call “airplane exercises” to support the circulation in your legs. “Write” the ABCs with your feet and shift positions often to encourage good circulation. After 6 weeks, you may resume some physical exercise. Begin with walking and gradually increase your activities, slowly resuming your normal routine.

Postpartum blues: It is not uncommon for new mothers to experience feelings of depression or sadness. These feelings are known as “baby blues”. You may feel like crying “for no reason”, feel exhausted or overwhelmed. Make sure you are getting plenty of rest, a lot of support and nurturing from your husband and other loved ones and get as much sleep as you can. You should feel like “your old self” within a week or 2. In some cases, the feelings of depression or sadness are more severe, or continue for more than 2 weeks. And, sometimes the thoughts and emotions new mothers have can be more serious and may be an indication of postpartum depression. If you or your family is concerned that you are not enjoying motherhood, or you are feeling angrier or sadder than normal, please call me and let me know.

Birth Control & Intercourse: Do not resume sexual intercourse until your bleeding has stopped and you feel ready. It is important to wait until your body has had time to heal before introducing anything into the vagina. When you are ready to resume an intimate relationship, please consider your contraceptive options. Breastfeeding is not an entirely effective method of birth control. Many couples choose barrier methods. Some choose prescriptions. I would be glad to discuss these options with you.

Welcome to Motherhood: Remember to slow down. Enjoy this time with your baby. Nursing and cuddling your baby will help both you and the baby move into this beautiful new relationship together.

Call us if:

- You or your baby runs a fever over 100.4* F.
- Your baby turns yellow in the first 24-hours.
- Your baby’s mouth, lips, or trunk turn blue.
- You have any questions or concerns.

In case of an emergency, call 911.