



BORO PARK OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY, P.C. KLIOT MIDWIFERY SERVICES

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Postpartum Instructions

Rest

- During the first two weeks after the baby arrives you will need plenty of rest. This means all household chores (cleaning, food shopping, cooking, laundry) should be done by someone else.
- Nap when the baby naps and keep visitors to a minimum.
- Do not lift anything heavier than your new baby for the first week. If you have other children, continue to mother them emotionally, but leave the hands-on chores to others.
- Remember, fatigue can decrease your milk supply and your ability to adjust to your new family addition. The rest you take now at the beginning has an important affect on how you will in a few weeks.

Bleeding and Cramping

- Vaginal bleeding after birth can last up to 4-6 weeks. During the first few days, your bleeding will be bright red and heavy, with small clots, similar to a heavy period. Over the next week, it will lighten in color and decrease in amount. By the tenth day, it is usually pink and watery. It is normal to stain on and off for 4-6 weeks.
- Your activity level can increase bleeding, especially during the first two weeks after delivery. If your bleeding has slowed and then becomes bright red and heavy again, it may be a sign you are overdoing it and need to slow down and rest.
- It is normal to experience cramping, or *afterbirth pains*, for several days after your birth. It is normal for these pains to increase with each birth. You may experience cramping and a small gush of blood during nursing, as your uterus contracts.
- You may take 2 extra strength Tylenol every 3-4 hours, or Ibuprofen, 600 mg, every 4-6 hours for pain.
- If you are soaking through 1 large pad in an hour, or passing large blood clots as big as your fist, or if you notice a foul odor, call our office. If you experience cramping or constant abdominal pain that is not relieved with pain medications, call our office.

Perineal Care

- Whether you had stitches or not, your bottom is most likely sore. Sitz baths or warm tub baths are wonderful to ease the aches and swelling. If you take a bath, make sure it is clean (do not clean it yourself!), and don't use soaps or oils. You may use herbal healing remedies, such as comfrey, calendula, and arnica.
- Any swelling should resolve over the first few days after delivery. Change your pads frequently, and avoid wiping vigorously after you go the bathroom; pat dry instead.

- Begin kegel exercises as soon as possible to help restore your pelvic floor muscle tone. Every time you feed your baby, try to do 10 kegels.
- Hemorrhoids may be treated with witch-hazel or Tucks pads, or Dermoplast spray. Over-the-counter hemorrhoid cream may also be used.
- If you had stitches, they do not need to be removed as they will dissolve naturally over the next weeks. Some “tightness” and itching sensations are normal signs of healing. Avoid sitting on very soft cushions, and try to keep your legs together as much as possible to aid in the healing process.
- Everyday, you should feel a little better. If your perineal area feels *worse* than it did the day before, please call. If your tear/episiotomy site becomes red, inflamed, has a foul odor, or is oozing, call our office.

Breast Care for Breastfeeding Moms

- Breastfeeding can be a wonderful experience for you and your infant. But sometimes it does take practice. Some babies come out of the womb already wonderful suckers, while some need more time to get the hang of it. *Every baby is different.* Try not to compare yourself or your baby to your neighbor, or to the experience you had with your other children. Remember it is a process, and you and your baby are learning together. It is unusual that a mother can not produce enough milk to feed her baby. It is also very unusual that a baby is unable to learn how to or is truly uninterested in breastfeeding. We are here to help you with any questions, concerns, or obstacles you come across along your breastfeeding journey, so please don't hesitate to call on us for assistance.
- Your milk should come in 3-5 days after your birth, but can take as long as 7 days. When your milk first comes in, your breast will undergo a dramatic transformation!
- During the first 24-48 hours you may experience breast engorgement, marked by very full, firm, warm breasts. You may even get a slight temperature during these hours (99.0-100.0 F). This is all normal, but may be very uncomfortable. Frequent nursing, warm compresses applied directly to your breasts, warm showers, and hand expressing some milk before feedings may help with the fullness and discomfort. Applying cold cabbage leaves directly to your breasts can also help with engorgement.
- Wear a loose-fitting bra, especially for the first week after delivery.
- If your nipples become sore, cracked, or dry, rub some of your breast milk directly onto your breasts before and after feeding. You can also use Lanolin cream on your nipples. Use only warm water to clean your breasts. Soaps and powders can cause your nipples to dry and crack and become sore. Allow your breasts to air dry as much as possible to aid healing.
- You may take 2 extra strength Tylenol every 3-4 hours, or Ibuprofen, 600 mg, every 4-6 hours for pain. Aspirin is *not* safe for breastfed babies.

Breast Care for Bottle Feeding Moms

- Your milk will still come in 3-5 days after your birth, and you may still experience some engorgement.
- Wear a snug fitting bra, and *do not stimulate your breasts at all* (do not put the baby to the breast, do not squeeze your nipples to “see what comes out”, stand with your back to the water in the shower).

- Cold compresses applied directly to your breasts will help decrease milk production. Place cold green cabbage leaves under your bra throughout the day to help the milk dry up.
- You may “leak” milk for the a few weeks, which is normal.
- You may take 2 extra strength Tylenol every 3-4 hours, or Ibuprofen, 600 mg, every 4-6 hours for pain.

Sweating and Urination

- After birth your body will rid itself of all the extra fluid it needed during pregnancy. You may sweat often, and will need to urinate more frequently. Do not decrease your fluid intake. Your feet may be swollen for many days, especially if you had an IV. Rest with your feet up several times a day to help drain the fluids.
- Infrequent urination can lead to bladder infections. Make sure you sit on the toilet at least every 2 hours to empty even if you don’t feel the urge to go. If you are having trouble urinating, try standing in a warm shower or sitting in a warm tub of water. You can also spray warm water over your perineum with a squeeze bottle while sitting on the toilet.
- If you are unable to empty your bladder, or you experience painful urination, call the our office.

Bowel Movements

- During labor and birth, your intestinal tract slows down. You should have your first bowel movement within 3-5 days of your birth. If you have stitches or have hemorrhoids, the anticipation of the first bowel movement is usually worse than the actual event.
- Drink plenty of fluids (about 8-12 glasses a day), and eat foods high in fiber (dried fruit, raw vegetables, bran, whole grains) to avoid constipation.
- You can take a stool softener such as Metamucil or Colace, but avoid strong laxatives.

Activity and Exercise

- You may start modified exercises 2 weeks after birth. Remember it will take time for you body to return to it’s non-pregnant shape. Slowly increase your activity level each day. If you over do it, you may experience an increase in bleeding. This is your body telling you to slow down. *Listen to your body!*
- Do not restart any pre-pregnant exercise routines until after your postpartum checkup. Just getting outside for a short walk counts as exercise, and can be great, both physically and emotionally.
- Kegel exercises help your vagina and pelvic floor get back into shape, and will help heal your perineum. Do 10 squeezes every time you feed your baby or after you urinate.
- You can do modified sit-ups. Begin by crossing your arms over your chest, keep your chin up, and bend your knees. Try 10-20 each day for the first week and then add 5 more each week. Try 10-20 ankle rotations and foot flexions each day.
- After 6 weeks, you can begin leg lifts, which are excellent for strengthening the lower abdomen.

Nutrition

- Eating well and staying hydrated is very important during this postpartum period. Continue to make healthy eating choices and drink plenty of fluids.
- If you are breastfeeding, your calorie needs actually increase from those during pregnancy; this is not a time for dieting! You may continue taking prenatal vitamins as needed. Wait until after you have had a bowel movement to restart vitamins or iron supplementation.
- Remember to continue eating fruits, vegetables, and proteins (meat, cheese, tofu, beans, eggs) everyday.
- Drink plenty of fluids: 8-12 glasses a day.
- If you are constipated, eat raw fruits and vegetables, bran cereals and other high fiber foods. Prune juice is especially helpful.
- Pregnancy tea, red raspberry tea, and mother's milk tea are helpful in milk production and help with after-birth pains.

Postpartum Blues

- Many women experience postpartum "blues" during the first days and weeks after birth. It can be normal to feel overwhelmed, weepy for no apparent reason, and anxious. This is all normal, due to the shifts in your hormones and to the changes a new baby brings to your life. These feelings usually go away on their own within the first few weeks.
- Fatigue is one of the leading causes of postpartum depression, so rest as much as possible during the first few weeks.
- If these feelings persist, or you feel depressed, very anxious, disconnected from your baby, unable to care for yourself or your baby, you must call our office. If you are unable to call yourself, have a family member or friend contact us.

Follow-Up

- Please schedule your post partum appointment between 21 and 56 days after birth. We want to know how you are doing, make sure you are healing well, and discuss family planning. Depending on your insurance, you will need an appointment during this time to receive your benefits.
- For routine questions or concerns, call the office at 718-693-1011 or 718-851-3202, between 9-5 pm, Monday through Thursday, or between 9-2 pm on Fridays.

FOR EMERGENCIES ONLY, call 718-693-1011 to page the midwife or doctor on call.

WARNING SIGNS

Call our office if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Soaking more than 1 maxi-pad per hour
- Passing large clots bigger than your fist
- Foul smelling vaginal odor or discharge
- Increased pain near your stitches
- Pain with urination, or difficulty urinating
- Pain, redness or increased warmth over the veins in your thigh or calf
- Pain, redness, streaks, or heat in one or both of your breasts
- Severe headache that does not go away with Tylenol or rest
- Visual changes, chest pain, or shortness of breath
- Flu-like symptoms (chills, aches)
- Fever of 100.4 or greater