

- **Diet**---Continue to eat a well-balanced, healthy diet as you did in pregnancy. Maintain adequate fluid intake if you are breast-feeding. Iron-rich foods are important if you have been anemic.
- Continue taking either a **prenatal or multi-vitamin** daily for one month if you are not nursing and continue iron for one month if this was recommended to you. If nursing, continue vitamins as long as you are nursing.
- **Activity**---Gradually increase your activity to normal levels over the first 1-2 weeks, realizing that you may need to rest when you are tired or plan periods of daily rest. No activities are prohibited; you may go up and down stairs, take showers or tub baths, ride in a car, and drive when you feel up to it. Avoid becoming overly tired. (After a Cesarean delivery, you should wait at least 10-14 days after delivery to drive a car, and 4-6 weeks to lift anything heavier than 10 pounds.)
- **Exercise**---It is probably best to spend the first 1-2 weeks simply caring for yourself and your baby. Walking is the best exercise to begin with and your exercise level may increase gradually as you are comfortable.
- Your **bleeding** will last 4-6 weeks with progressive decline in amount. Excessive activity may increase bleeding. Passing an occasional clot is not unusual. You may resume using tampons after three weeks if this is more comfortable.
- **Perineal care**---Continue to cleanse the perineum and anal areas with a warm-water bottle when your pad is changed, or after a bowel movement. *Sitting in a tub of warm water will ease the "tightness" of the healing perineum.* Hemorrhoids should be treated symptomatically by prevention of constipation with stool softeners and increased fluid intake, resting on your side to prevent pressure on the hemorrhoids, and use of over-the-counter Hydrocortisone preparation, such as Anusol-HC ointment. Call if your hemorrhoids or perineum are becoming sorer over time. All stitches will dissolve within a few weeks. (If you have "steri-strip" tape strips after a cesarean delivery, remove them by one week after you go home.)
- **Constipation**---Take Colace (docusate sodium) 100mg capsules, 1-2 daily until you have a soft bowel movement and for as long as you are on narcotic pain medications. If you need a laxative, you may use a mild laxative such as Milk of Magnesia or Miralax as needed.
- **Intercourse**---may be resumed after 3-4 weeks or when comfortable. Pregnancy can occur even while nursing and before menstruation resumes. Contraception will be discussed before you go home. Condoms are an option prior to deciding on longer term contraception at your six-week checkup. Lubricants such as K-Y Liquid or Astroglide are helpful, particularly in nursing mothers.
- Most women feel tired, a little overwhelmed and sometimes intermittently tearful within a few days or weeks of giving birth. A combination of sleep deprivation and hormonal changes make you particularly vulnerable to "**baby blues**". This is normal and usually you can mostly feel happy about your baby. **Postpartum depression** is more significant---feeling sad, anxious or "wired" all the time, not enjoying your baby, or not "feeling like yourself". If you have feelings this bad, or any thoughts of harming yourself or your baby, please call our office number (608-729-6300) immediately.
- **NOTIFY US IF:**
  - Temperature of 100.5° Fahrenheit (38° Centigrade) orally
  - Bleeding which seems to be increasing despite rest, especially saturating a pad or more per hour for three hours straight.
  - Pain of the abdomen or perineum which is continuing to worsen.
  - Evidence of breast infection, including fever, redness and/or soreness of the breast.

***Please call 729-6300 soon to make a postpartum checkup appointment for 4-6 weeks after your delivery.***