

Post Partum Information

Warning Signs

- Fever over 100.4
- Heavy, prolonged vaginal bleeding for 2 or more hours
- Worsening, unusual, or intense pain including headache, chest pain, shortness of breath, abdominal pain
- Spreading redness or pus from any stitches or incision
- Persistent pain, swelling, and redness in a leg (some swelling is normal)
- Severe headache that does not resolve with Tylenol
- Right upper abdominal pain or recurrent episodes of vomiting
- Small amount of urine outputs
- Persistent or severe depression, bizarre or dangerous thoughts or impulses or wanting to harm

Moods and Activity

Having a baby is very exciting and can be a little overwhelming. After birth, endorphins continue to be in our bodies for a few days. The feeling of euphoria lasts with these endorphins. Often the endorphins decrease around the time moms start feeling very tired. On day three, women sometimes feel a dip in their mood. It is normal to cry and feel a little upset, overwhelmed and over tired. This change in mood can last for a few hours up to a few days. If you continue feeling sad, crying often or down for longer than 10 days please call us.

The first couple of weeks are the time to get to know the baby and recover from delivery. You need to rest, eat, bathe and feed the baby. If you are feeling well with in the first week or two, you can slowly begin to walk around the neighborhood. We suggest not resuming intercourse for the first couple of weeks. By 4-6 weeks you can resume intercourse if you are feeling good. *You will need to use condoms or some type of contraception since you can get pregnant just after delivery.*

Things to do to help you feel good:

- Rest. When the baby sleeps, mom ought to sleep.
- After feeding baby if you have someone with you, give that support person the baby to care for so you can rest or take a shower.
- Get out in the sun for 20 minutes a day.
- Eat a healthy diet with large amounts of protein and fruits and vegetables.
- Drink 80 oz of water.
- When family and friends come over, sit down. You do not need to entertain.
- If friends ask what they can do, suggest help around the house or for them to bring home cooked dinners for you.
- Ask for help when you need it.

Breastfeeding

Our goal is for you to have successful latch and pain-free breastfeeding. If you are still having problems with breast feeding please call us or a lactation consultant.

If you have any problems with cracking or sore nipples, position or latch need to be corrected. Please contact us or a lactation consultant regarding how to get correct this problem.

After feeding, express some breast milk and rub around your nipple. Allow nipples to dry prior to covering them. If your nipples continue to hurt you can use lanolin or Motherlove nipple cream to help heal breasts.

While breastfeeding if you have any hardness, or pain in the breast, check position of the baby. Plugged ducts are common and can be relieved with good position and latch, feeding often, warm compress and wearing loose or no bra. If you have fever or flu-like symptoms along with a plugged duct, continue to breast feed and call your midwife. You do not need to stop breastfeeding if you have these issues and stopping could make the problem worse.

Milk supply

Breastfeeding is a wonderful way to feed your baby. Some women get nervous about the amount that their baby is getting. The first milk is called colostrum. It is thick, yellowish milk. This is the perfect milk for the newborn baby as it has large amounts of antibiotics and antimicrobial properties. It aids in moving the first stool, meconium.

On day three, the milk supply starts. This is the day women can get engorged or start feeling really full. If you have pain with the milk coming in feed the baby. If that still does not help you can take a warm shower and try to express a little breast milk.

Pumping is not a good option because breast milk is a supply and demand system and if you bring out more milk your body will make more milk which could cause you more pain.

Ways to tell that your baby is getting enough milk, s/he is satisfied for 1-3 hours after eating, making wet and dirty diapers and gaining weight. Young babies love to suck even when not hungry. If after 45 minutes of feeding your baby still wants to suck but is not drinking you can walk around with your baby and hold him/her close to you. Babies love to be near their moms and even though your baby wants to suck a lot does not always mean that s/he is not getting enough milk. A baby's stomach is very small. At birth, their stomach is the size of your pinky nail, three days the top of your pinky from the first knuckle and day 10 your thumb from the first knuckle. That is why they have to eat so often.

To ensure good milk supply mom needs to eat a well balanced diet similar to the amount you ate in pregnancy and maybe a little more. You will need 80 ounces of water every day, 60-80 grams of protein, whole grains and fruits and vegetables. You can continue to take your prenatal vitamin while breastfeeding.

If for whatever reason you choose not to breastfeed, wearing a bra all the time and not stimulating breasts will keep milk to a minimum.

Uterus

Your uterus has been growing for nine months, holding your baby, placenta, and amniotic fluid. It has also become more vascular. All of the changes that took place need some time to reverse. Immediately your uterus will be around your belly button. Over the next 6 weeks the uterus will slowly go back to its pre-pregnancy size.

The site where the placenta was attached to the uterus needs to heal and as it does, one has some bleeding which is called lochia. The first lochia is bright red blood which lasts for a few days. Then the lochia becomes brownish blood this can start a few days after birth until 2 weeks. The lochia then becomes yellowish and then white. It is normal to have some bleeding up to 6 weeks.

Sometimes the bleeding can decrease and then increase again. That could be related to increased activity. If your bleeding does become heavier, increase your fluids and rest a little more. *Listen to your body.* It will tell you if you are doing too much too fast.

Normally the lochia does not have any clots in it. If you have been lying or sitting down for a while and get up then notice a clot come out, it probably is just blood that had been in the vagina that coagulated. It may not be a problem but if you continue to have clots or heavy bleeding, increase your fluid intake and rest. Call your midwife if you fill a pad an hour for two hours in a row or have large clots.

Perineum

After a vaginal birth, your perineum will be sore. Muscles have stretched and sometimes have torn. Keeping ice on your bottom for the first couple of days can help with swelling and pain. Ibuprofen and Tylenol will also help. Continue the tips that you were shown at the hospital to help with healing and pain including: dermoplast spray, pad lined with Tucks and using hemorrhoidal preps (Preparation H or plain witch hazel).

Sitz bath will help heal your bottom. Sitting in a tub with warm water every day for 15-20 minutes. You can put herbs in the tub to aid with healing. Motherlove has some herbs that you can get at our office or Whole Foods/Vitamin Cottage. Apothocracy Tinctura (2900 East Sixth Avenue, Cherry Creek, Denver on the corner of 6th and Fillmore) also sells herbs for sitz bath.

Calendula tincture (alcohol based) can also be used every time you use the bathroom. Add 20 drops to approximately 8 oz water and pour over perineum. You will need to separate the labia to get the tincture on your healing bottom. By 6 weeks your bottom should be completely healed.

Next Appointment

Please schedule an appointment with us for 6 weeks after delivery. If you feel you need to see us any earlier than this please let us know.

Thank you for allowing South Denver Midwives to be a part of your baby's birth.

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