

POSTPARTUM DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

DIET: Continue healthy eating habits. Fad diets for quick weight loss are to be avoided. Most new mothers lose weight gradually. Breastfeeding mothers need adequate fluid intake to make an adequate breast milk supply. Keep yourself well hydrated, and increase your caloric intake by 500 calories/day. If you are overweight, it is recommended you wait 2 months to start a weight reduction program. Caloric intake less than 1800 calories/day will decrease breast milk production.

ACTIVITY: Adequate rest is extremely important during the first weeks at home. Try to get an hour of bed rest twice daily for 2 weeks. *Rest when your baby sleeps.* Lift nothing heavier than your baby for 2 weeks if you delivered vaginally and for 6 weeks if you delivered by Cesarean birth. (*Your baby in the car seat is too heavy for you to carry!*) Base your physical activity on how you feel. Walking briskly is an excellent form of exercise during the postpartum period (the first 6 weeks after delivery.) You may resume sexual activity 6 weeks after delivery, after your obstetrician has seen you. Refrain from driving for several weeks. Remember not to drive alone until you are ready to handle whatever may happen.

VAGINAL DISCHARGE (LOCHIA): This will continue for approximately 2-6 weeks postpartum and occasionally longer. The color change of the lochia goes from red to pink to yellow to nearly clear. Any bleeding heavier than a normal period, passing of blood clots larger than a golf ball or having a foul odor needs to be reported immediately to the OB-GYN Clinic during normal duty hours or to L&D Triage after hours.

LACERATIONS: Continue to perform your peri-care after each urination, after each bowel movement and as necessary or as desired. If indicated, it will be helpful and more comfortable to continue your 15-20 minute Sitz baths 2 or more times/day for up to several weeks. Use of witch hazel pads may also be continued. Your stitches are dissolvable, so do not need to be removed. It is good to use a hand mirror to check your stitches for redness or separation of the skin. If either is noticed, report it to the OB-GYN Clinic or go to L&D Triage after normal duty hours. *Do not put anything in your vagina.* Do not douche or use tampons or vaginal creams/medications until okayed by your OB MD.

CESAREAN BIRTH INCISION: Keep the incision clean using mild soap and water in the shower. Use caution that the shower is not directly hitting your incision. Pat dry. Avoid tight underwear and clothing that prevents good air flow to your incision. If you have steri-strips, they will normally fall off by themselves around 7-10 days. You may remove them yourself if they have not come off by this time. If you have staples and they have not been removed, be sure your OB provider has scheduled an appointment for their removal. **INSPECT** your incision. If you see any incisional redness, any opening in the incision or any cloudy or foul smelling drainage you need to report to the OB-GYN Clinic, or the L&D Triage after hours. The incision will heal similarly to a cut. It is normal to have clear yellow discharge or very small amounts of bleeding from the incision.

EMOTIONS: It is normal to experience emotional ups and down in the post partum period. These vary from woman to woman and may range from very slight to very intense. These emotional fluctuations can be related to the drastic changes in hormones, fatigue, inexperience or lack of confidence in parenting skills. Several other factors include: loneliness or isolation from supportive adults or the constant full time demands made by your baby. If these feelings overwhelm you and lead to increased anxiety, depression or a total inability to cope, you must report these to your Primary Care Physician as soon as possible as help for this is available for you in the OB-GYN Clinic.

MEDICATIONS: You should continue to take your prenatal vitamins, iron, Colace and other prescribed medications as directed. If prescribed Percocet or Norco for pain relief, watch you total daily intake of acetaminophen (Tylenol). Do not take more than 4 grams of acetaminophen in 24 hours. Count the milligrams of acetaminophen contained in any narcotic medication you're taking like Percocet or Norco. When taking prescribed narcotic pain relievers, you may experience dizziness or drowsiness. Stop taking medications and contact your provider as soon as possible if you develop a rash, itching or shortness of breath. Nausea can be a side effect that may be resolved by a change in medication. Do not drink alcoholic beverages or operate potentially dangerous machinery or devices while taking narcotic medication. Consult your provider **BEFORE** discharge regarding a desirable form of birth control. If breastfeeding, insure that the medication is compatible with breastfeeding. Remember, breastfeeding is **NOT** a form of birth control. The possibility of becoming pregnant may exist soon after childbirth whether or not you have resumed your menstrual period.