



Hospital Discharge Instructions

- 1. REST:** You may be surprised at how tired you become after minor activity. Plan to rest when the baby sleeps. Limit visitors the first week or so.
- 2. ACTIVITY:** Keep stairs to a minimum and no heavy lifting (over 10 pounds). If you have a toddler, encourage him/her to climb up on your lap rather than lift. Having help with the cleaning and meals will mean more rest for you and more time to get used to caring for your baby and establish a routine.
- 3. NUTRITION:** Eat the same well balanced diet as instructed during pregnancy. Do not diet without consulting your doctor. Include plenty of fluids to prevent constipation. Continue your prenatal vitamins unless otherwise instructed.
- 4. VAGINAL DISCHARGE:** Expect this to last 4-6 weeks. It will gradually change from red to pink-brown and then to a straw colored discharge. The amount will vary from heavy to light. Activity may affect the amount of flow. If you have a dramatic increase in bleeding, rest more. Call the office if you are saturating more than 1 pad per hour. Do not use tampons.
- 5. EPISIOTOMY:** Continue tub baths once or twice a day to promote health and for comfort. Cleanse the area with tap water as instructed in the hospital. Occasionally stitches may separate at the skin level. This is not uncommon and will heal by itself. It is important to keep the area clean. Call the office if you notice any drainage, increased tenderness or inflammation of the stitches. It takes about 1-3 weeks to heal and may be tender longer.
- 6. HEMORRHOIDS:** These are very common after delivery and usually go away in 2 weeks. For comfort we recommend 1) Tucks, 2) warm tub baths, 3) Preparation H, 4) Tylenol, 5) various spray or ointment may be prescribed in the hospital or by calling the office if problems occur after you are home.
- 7. BATHING:** Tub baths or showers – use plain water – no bubble baths or oils or you may run the risk of infection.
- 8. BREASTS:** Wear a good support bra 25 hours a day for at least 2 weeks if not nursing, continuously if nursing. If you notice an area that is tender, reddened, or warm, this may be an early sign of infection. Call your doctor, hot pack the tender area and continue to breast feed. **IF NURSING:** adequate rest, good diet and increased fluids (10-12 glasses/day) are essential to establish a good supply of milk. Keep nipples clean and dry (no soap). After each feeding, air dry nipples by using a low setting on your hair dryer. This also helps to “toughen up” the nipple and prevent cracking. Do not use a breast shield for sore nipples. **IF NOT NURSING:** avoid excess fluids. If breasts do become full and engorged, apply cool packs and express enough milk to be comfortable. Wear a bra that gives good support 24 hours/day for 2 weeks.

9. **MENSTRUATION:** a) If nursing – you may not begin your period until you wean your baby or you may begin in 2-4 months. Do not consider breastfeeding a form of birth control.
b) If not nursing – your period will usually occur in 5-8 weeks. It is not unusual for the first period to be heavy.

10. **EMOTIONS:** Hormones are rapidly changing after delivery and it is not unusual to go through short periods of depression. It is important to get adequate rest – tiredness only adds to this problem. If these feelings occur:

1. Realize they are normal and will not last.
2. Seek support from your spouse, family or a friend who's had a baby.
3. Take time out from this new responsibility. Have someone else care for the baby and go for a walk or go shopping.
4. Call the office and talk with our nurse practitioner (227-9141 DT, 770-1385 MW or 265-6745 WB if these feelings persist).

11. **EXERCISE:** Please refer to the exercise sheet you were given.

12. **INTERCOURSE:** douching and the use of tampons should be avoided until your doctor examines you and verifies that the healing has occurred. This will take about 4 weeks. Your flow has generally stopped and the cervix closed. Changing hormones can cause a decrease in vaginal lubrication and cause dryness. A vaginal lubricant such as Astroglide or Lubrin may be helpful. It is not recommended to use Vaseline. Please discuss your choice of family planning method with your doctor.

If you have a problem or questions, please call our nurse practitioner at the office (227-9141 DT, 770-1385 MW or 265-6745 WB).

Be sure and contact us immediately if you have:

- A. Heavy vaginal bleeding with clots (1 pad/hr. or heavier; clots larger than egg size).
- B. Chills and fever
- C. Severe pain
- D. Foul smelling or purulent vaginal discharge
- E. Breast problems with fever
- F. Severe depression

Remember our office phone is answered 24 hours a day.