

# Gwinnet Physicians Group OB/GYN

## Postpartum Discharge Instructions

### If you had stitches:

Cleaning gently with soap and water is best. You can use the squirt bottle from the hospital. Use warm water and gentle soap after urinating or having a bowel movement.

Sitz bath, where you soak your bottom in warm water, helps with cleaning, comfort, and healing. You can purchase a special basin for this type of bath at most pharmacies and grocery stores. Soaking in a clean tub also works. Sitz bath can be used 2-3 times per day as needed.

### Breast Engorgement:

This may or may not happen when your milk comes in on day 2-5, regardless of whether you are breast or bottle feeding.

- For breastfeeding, nurse as frequently and as long as possible.
- Use your hands to express enough milk to relieve discomfort. Expressing milk by hand can also help with softening the breast enough for the baby to latch.
- Take Motrin.
- For bottle feeding, avoid stimulation of your breast with hands or warm water from the shower. Take Motrin.
- Wear a tight bra or try wrapping breasts with an ace bandage. You may also try cold cabbage leaves. Use the leaves to cover both breasts, put your bra on to hold the leaves in place and leave on for 2-3 hours. Repeat as often as needed. This usually helps to dry up milk and relieve engorgement pain in 24-36 hours.

### Exercises:

- Kegels: These are exercises to strengthen the muscles that support the uterus, bladder, intestines, and rectum. These exercises can help you heal from childbirth and help prevent or treat incontinence. To do Kegel exercises, you have to first identify the muscles you want to work. You can do this by stopping urinating midstream. If you stop the urine, you have found the right muscles. Tense these muscles, hold for 5 seconds, then release. You can start these exercises right after delivery. Work up to 100 a day, doing 10, ten times per day.
- Chin to chest exercises: you can also start this right after delivery. These exercises gently work your abdominal muscles.
- Sit-Ups: In 2 weeks, you may begin sit-ups, starting with hands at sides until you can do this with ease, then move to hands behind your head.
- Leg raises: You can start these 2 weeks after delivery, but begin with just one leg at a time. Monitor your progress by feeling for the closure of the gap between your abdominal muscles. This is called the diastasis.

### Nutrition:

All moms need to drink plenty of fluids, mainly water. With breastfeeding, you need 300 more calories per day than when you were pregnant. Continue taking your prenatal vitamin.

### Activity:

Listen to your body and expect to be tired for the first 4-6 weeks. Daily naps are recommended. If you are tired, lie down. If you notice your bleeding is increasing again, it may be a sign you are doing too much. Breastfeed (this helps decrease bleeding), massage your belly (also helps decrease bleeding), and rest. If it doesn't resolve, call the office. It is normal to have an increase in flow after nursing and two weeks after delivery for a few hours when healing at the placental site happens.

### Baby Blues versus Postpartum Depression:

It is normal to experience emotional highs and lows during the first week after delivery. This is the result of the physical and emotional changes associated with childbirth. It usually resolves by itself. Good family/friend support and sleep will help. Postpartum depression happens later, after the first 7-10 days and it can begin anytime in the first year. It is more intense than the blues and lasts longer. If you feel you are experiencing postpartum depression, call the office.

### Bathing:

You may take tub baths and showers. No swimming until bleeding has stopped.

### Care of vagina:

We recommend no sex, tampons, or anything else in the vagina for 6 weeks.

### Call the office for any of the following:

- Severe headache or chest pain
- Temperature over 100.4
- Bleeding that soaks 2 pads in one hour
- Foul odor or discharge
- Severe abdominal pain
- Painful or very lumpy breasts
- Calf pain or hot spots on calf with or without swelling

### Follow up:

If you are not having any problems, call the office within 6 weeks after delivery to make an appointment for your postpartum visit. If you plan on an IUD (Mirena, Paragard, or Skyla) or the Nexplanon (implant in the arm), birth control, you should make an appointment at 4-5 weeks after delivery. It is best to schedule your appointment with the midwife that delivered your baby.

### Care of the Uncircumcised Penis:

No special care is needed. Do NOT retract the foreskin Mild soap and water on the penis is good. Rinse well.

### Circumcision Care:

Wash your hands before and after changing the baby's diaper. Clean the area with lukewarm water only for the first few days. Do not use soap or alcohol on the penis. Begin tub baths only when the belly button and penis are healed. You may use soap and water once the penis is healed. It is critical that you retract the foreskin with each diaper change for the first 2 weeks to allow for proper healing.