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POST PARTUM CARE GUIDELINES

Congratulations on your new baby!

Please call our office before leaving the hospital to make your postpartum appointment with the physician that delivered your baby. This appointment should be scheduled 6 weeks following delivery unless otherwise specified.

Until you are examined by your physician at your postpartum visit:

- No tub baths, take only showers
- No swimming or Jacuzzi's
- No douching or tampons
- No exercise
- No intercourse (Use foam and condoms when resuming intercourse to prevent infection)

Other restrictions may be given to you at the time you are discharged from the hospital. Please follow your physician's orders.

CIRCULATION While in the hospital, do not cross your legs or sit for long periods of time with them dangling down in front of you. This may lead to complications such as phlebitis. If you notice any redness or sore areas on your legs, please notify your nurse. If at home, please call our office.

BREAST CARE If you are nursing, cleanse only with water, do not use soap or alcohol. Wear a tight fitting bra for support. Also, breast pads and nipple creams are helpful. Your nipples will be sore until they become toughened. Continue taking your prenatal vitamins and call if you need refills. Your milk comes in on the third day unless you have had surgery or have had a cesarean section. Usually, you will experience symptoms such as fever or achiness, but it should go away after that day. Call our office if a breast shows reddened areas or if fever is present. Relax and enjoy nursing your baby! Remember to be patient; this is a learning experience for both you and your baby. When breast feeding, you may or may not have periods. If you don't have any periods, do not rely on this as a method of birth control. You could still become pregnant even before your first period starts.

If you are bottle feeding, to dry up your breasts you should wear a tight fitting bra twenty-four hours a day. Sometimes when bottle feeding your baby, you might feel some breast stimulation when you hold your baby close to you as you feed. If this happens, change position and hold your baby away from your breasts and continue to feed. After feeding, cuddle your baby for that close bonding experience. You may use cold compresses on your breasts. Tylenol can be taken for any discomfort. If you have any breast redness or fever, please call our office.

BLEEDING Your flow may continue postpartum until your first menses. However, it should not be extremely heavy. Increased activity may account for a heavier flow, but this should not exceed a normal period. If this should happen, get off of your feet and elevate them. If this doesn't slow up your flow be sure to call our office.

EPISIOTOMY While in the hospital, you will receive Dermoplast spray, Tucks or a Port-A-Sitz. Make sure you change your pad often. Do not wear tampons. Usually after a shower, you will spray the Dermoplast on your pad or six inches from your bottom directly. If your hemorrhoids are bothering you, use the sitz bath frequently and wipe with Tucks. Use your Port-A-Sitz for twenty minute soaks, two to three times daily. Your Port-A-Sitz bath is yours to take home with you. You will also receive a peri bottle to use with warm water to cleanse your episiotomy area after using the bathroom. Any episiotomy stitches you may have are dissolvable and will not have to be removed.

CESAREAN SECTIONS Although you may be extremely sore while in the hospital, move as much as you can. Roll from side to side, stretch, and wiggle your toes. Remember, the more you move, the faster you will recover. One possible complication from a cesarean section is gas pain. Your abdomen can become distended and cause you a great deal of discomfort. You will not be given food until you pass some of your gas. If you are having trouble, move as you can to work this out. Walking around your room or in the halls is good, if allowed by your physician.

In order to clear your lungs and prevent complications, the hospital nurse will show you how to deep breathe and cough. This is done by holding a blanket or pillow against your abdomen securely and coughing after a deep breath.

After your dressing is removed, you can shower. Let the warm water and soap fall down across your incision. Air dry your incision for fifteen minutes after your shower. Your incision may have staples. The nurse will put adhesive steri-strips on the incision when they are removed. Remove the steri-strips on the incision after you have been home one week. If you had sutures, they may or may not need to be removed. Your physician will let you know.

POST PARTUM DEPRESSION Some baby blues are normal and will disappear as your family adjusts to the new baby and you are feeling better physically. However, prolonged feelings of hopelessness or sadness, sleeping too much or not enough or wanting to harm yourself or your baby are not part of the normal baby blues. Please call your physician immediately. There is help available, don't be afraid to ask.

REMEMBER to take care of yourself and your baby! DO NOT push yourself too hard. Take notice of your pain levels or any increased bleeding. When you feel excessive pain or increased bleeding with any increased activity, do not continue with as much activity. Rest with feet up several times a day and nap when possible.

We have sincerely enjoyed participating in your care during this pregnancy. If you have any other questions or problems, please contact our office.