

Spartanburg

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Cesarean and Vaginal Delivery

We hope you have much happiness with the new addition to your family. Below are some suggestions to make the next few weeks go as smoothly as possible.

Activity

For the first week after you go home, it is important to rest as your body heals. Do not spend prolonged periods of time lying flat or sitting, and try not to cross your legs at the knees. Walking is important to your recovery. It is normal to feel tired after minimal activity. Listen to your body and increase your activities gradually as tolerated. It is generally safe to climb stairs, but you may find that you may need to limit how often, if you are feeling weak or uncomfortable.

- **Driving** — Driving should not be done for the first 2 weeks or if you are still in pain or needing pain medications.
- **Travel** — Travel should be avoided for at least two weeks and after two weeks you must get out of the car frequently and walk to maintain good circulation.
- **Exercise** — No strenuous exercise should be done for the first 4 weeks. Walking, daily activity and gentle "pulling-in" of the abdomen will promote muscle tone and may be done safely until your visit.
- **Employment** — Plan to return to work 6 to 8 weeks after delivery.

For women who have had an uncomplicated delivery, no activities need to be strictly prohibited.

Bleeding

Some bleeding or bloody discharge may continue for up to six weeks. At first this may appear red, with small clots, and gradually becomes pink, then yellow-gray. Return of the menstrual cycle varies, usually 6-10 weeks if NOT nursing, and generally after 3 months or more if you are nursing. Please call at any time if bleeding is heavier than a very heavy period or if you pass large clots.

Incision

Use light gauze covering to protect the incision or when you go out. "Steri-strip" tapes on the incision should be removed by two weeks after surgery. Keep the incision clean and dry. Itching, sensitivity and numb spots are to be expected. The skin edges generally heal together in 5 to 7 days, but internal healing does not develop strength until after 3 weeks.

Perineal Care

Especially if you have had a episiotomy, sitting in six inches of warm water or applying a warm wet washcloth a few times a day will not only feel good, but will accelerate healing. Use a peri-bottle or squirt bottle filled with lukewarm water on the perineum as you urinate to dilute the urine and lessen the sting. Topical numbing sprays or hemorrhoid creams are also helpful.

Breast-Feeding and Medications

Keep the nipples clean, dry and protected from chafing. Keep the breasts well supported with a good nursing bra. If you notice redness, pain, fever or swollen glands under the arms, call the office. During nursing, the list of medication which can safely be used is expanded from that used during pregnancy. Any drugs purchased without a prescription may be used safely during nursing. Those drugs that may make you sleepy may also make the baby sleepy. Many prescription drugs can be used safely during nursing. If your other physicians have any questions about prescriptions that you can take while nursing, please have them call us.

Bottle-Feeding

Avoid all breast stimulation! Keep the breasts well supported with a snug bra or breast wrap for a week or more. A sanitary pad in each cup can further compress the breasts. If they fill uncomfortably, apply an ice pack 3 to 4 times a day on the sides of the breasts and under the arm-pit. Try 2-3 Ibuprofens (400-600 mg) every 4 to 6 hours, for relief of pain.

Diet

Nursing women need an additional 500 to 750 calories a day. Women who are nursing should continue their vitamin supplements. Nursing woman also require supplemental protein and calcium that is best obtained by three 8-ounce glasses of milk per day (skim is lowest in calories). Yogurt and cottage cheese are also acceptable milk substitutes. Women with lactose intolerance should use the same dietary adjustments that they used in pregnancy for calcium supplementation. A total of 1500mg of calcium with vitamin D is required per day for prevention of osteoporosis. Women who are NOT nursing can return to their normal pre-pregnancy diet.

Cramps

In addition to incision discomfort, you may have "after birth" pains. They are usually gone by the time you leave the hospital or shortly after you get home. Try 2-3 Ibuprofen (each pill should be 200 mg) every 6 hours or 1-2 Tylenol (325 mg pills) every 4 hours.

Sexual Relations

You may resume sexual relations when it is comfortable to do so, probably in 4-6 weeks. Remember the possibility of becoming pregnant exists even if you have not had a period.

Contraception

Contraception may be started with your first normal period after delivery or after your six week exam. Think about and discuss your contraceptive needs before your first postpartum visit. Remember the possibility of becoming pregnant exists even if you have not had a period.

Hemorrhoids

Use Sitz baths and apply Nupercainal or Americaine ointment as necessary. Tucks pads or Witch Hazel applied with a cotton ball are very soothing.

Vitamins & Iron

After you have regained normal bowel function, resume vitamin and iron use until your six week check-up. If you are nursing, continue until you wean the baby.

Bathing

Heat may make you dizzy at first, so keep the water a little cooler and do NOT shower if you are home alone. You may wash your hair any time. Do not douche.

Constipation

If necessary, Milk of Magnesia is mild and effective. If hard stool persists, try Colace, Metamucil, or Citrucel daily until the problem is corrected. Prescriptions are generally not needed.

Emotions

After delivery you may have emotional ups and downs. Many women find themselves crying for no apparent reason, or feel sad, anxious, afraid, or angry. Usually, these are symptoms of postpartum "blues" and should go away within a few weeks. About 10% of mothers experience a more severe change called postpartum depression, which lasts longer and is more intense. This may require counseling or medical treatment. If you are not feeling better after the first few weeks or are worried that you are experiencing postpartum depression, please call the office immediately.

Follow-up Visit

Call the office within the week you get home in order to schedule a 6 week follow-up appointment for a full examination and contraceptive discussion. A picture of your baby to hang on our wall is always appreciated!

Spartanburg Office: 864.560.7002

Pelham Office: 864.849.9600

One of us is always available if problems occur, and will see you if necessary, before your routine postpartum visit. Call if:

- Temperature more than 100.5 degrees, or shakes or chills.
- Abdominal pain that is not relieved by rest, medication, or if the pain increases with time.
- Bleeding excessively (soaking a pad every 1 to 2 hours).
- Foul smelling vaginal discharge.
- Burning or pain with urination or low back pains.
- Leg pain, swelling or redness.
- Swollen tender area of the abdominal incision or a draining area.
- Worsening depression or anxiety.

** Before calling the office with a problem have a pencil and your pharmacy phone number available.

*** If you think you have a "fever" check with a thermometer before calling the office.

Please remember that a Cesarean is not just another way to have a baby but it is also major surgery that requires you to take time to heal. Please do not hesitate to call us if you have any questions. Once again, Congratulations on the birth of your new Baby!