



Congratulations! It has been our pleasure caring for you during your pregnancy. As you continue on your journey as a new parent, we are still with you. Over the next several weeks your body will change in many different ways. Below are some guidelines on what to expect, and what you should call the office for.

Follow-up Visits:

- If you had a vaginal delivery, we will see you in the office at 6 weeks. Please call the office to schedule! Someone from the office will call to check in on you around 2 weeks.
- If you had a cesarean section, we will see you in the office at 2 and 6 weeks post-delivery.

Bleeding:

- Your bleeding should continue to decrease over time. Most people will bleed for a total of 4-6 weeks. The last 2 weeks are generally very light and spotty. As you increase your activity it is NORMAL to have small increases in bleeding, and small clots.
- If your bleeding suddenly increases, becomes heavier, and you are changing more than a pad per hour, please call the office.
- Small clots are NORMAL. If you pass a clot larger than egg-sized, please call the office.

Care of Stitches:

- For vaginal deliveries, the stitches will dissolve on their own. Continue to use the peri-bottle from Emerson to wash the area EVERY time you go to the bathroom. Do this until your bleeding stops. Pat dry. You can apply Aquaphor or A&D ointment to the area. Itching is normal as the tissue heals. Sitz baths 2-3 times a day promotes healing and is highly recommended. If you are feeling increased pain in the area, swelling, warmth, foul odor, copious discharge or fever >100.4 you need to call our office.
- For cesarean sections, you may or may not have a dressing over your incision when you are discharged home. If you do have a dressing, you can remove it after 7 days. If you have steri-strips, leave them on until they fall off. If after 10 days they are still intact, you may remove them. Do not scrub the site. Wash gently with warm soapy water and use a hair-dryer to dry the area after showering. If the area becomes more painful, red, swollen, has a foul odor, you see a yellow-green discharge from the stitches, or fever >100.4, call the office.

Medications:

- Continue your **prenatal vitamin** for 6 weeks. If your baby is breastfeeding, or you are pumping, continue your vitamin until the baby is no longer taking breastmilk.
- If you were taking **iron** during pregnancy, you can continue it for 1-2 weeks, and then stop.
- Continue **Colace** (docusate sodium; stool softener) until your bowel movements are soft and regular. Take 100mg twice a day.
- **Ibuprofen** (600 mg) every 6 hours for pain. **Acetaminophen** (Tylenol) 650-1000mg every 6 hours for pain. These work well alternating, just as you did in the hospital. If you feel that this is not controlling your pain, you need to call the office.

Postpartum Mood Changes:

- In the first 2 weeks after your baby is born, you may have waves of feeling anxious, worried and weepy- this is normal and referred to as “Baby-Blues”. Hormone changes, adjusting to a new routine and lack of sleep all contribute to these feelings.
- If you find yourself feeling continuously sad, crying, irritable, angry, irrational- and these symptoms are persistently getting worse, you may have postpartum depression or postpartum anxiety. You may find your mind racing in the middle of the night, unable to sleep although you are exhausted, or maybe you cannot get out of bed. You may have a decreased appetite. Please call us- we are here to help you. You cannot control these feelings, and we want to connect you with the right resources.
- If you feel like harming yourself or the baby, if you are hearing voices, or hallucinating, these symptoms are SEVERE and you cannot make them go away. You need to call 911 or go to the closest Emergency Room.

Activity:

- Listen to your body, and increase activity based on how you feel. Everyone has a different birth story, and everyone has a different healing journey. There is no “right” answer. Start with walking.
- We recommend no sex and no tampons until your 6 week visit. If you feel comfortable having sex, remember that you can still get pregnant without a period!
- Do not drive if you are taking any narcotics for pain (oxycodone).

Other Words of Wisdom:

- Drink plenty of fluids. At least 64 ounces/day. Your body is healing. You have lost some blood from birthing a baby, and it is easy to become dehydrated. You need fluids to produce breastmilk.
- Rest. Ask for assistance. Bring in the helpers, food-makers and reinforcements. People want to help.
- You will notice an increase in urination a few days after you have your baby. Your body needs to get rid of all the extra fluids and blood volume it accumulated during pregnancy. Go to the bathroom regularly, do not overfill your bladder, and change your pads frequently.
- Start Kegel exercises at home, and consider an appointment with a pelvic floor physical specialist for muscle recovery. We can give you more information at your 6-week postpartum visit.
- You are not alone, and there are plenty of support groups, and new-parent groups available. Please reach out and ask questions. We are here for you!