

## **POSTPARTUM DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS**

Please see your postpartum booklet "Understanding Postpartum Health & Baby Care" for more in-depth postpartum information as well as informational videos.

### **WARNING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS:**

- Call your prenatal provider if you have any concerns or experience any of the following:
- Heavy vaginal bleeding – bright red bleeding saturating one pad per hour or more. Passing tissue or large clots (larger than an egg in size). Passing small clots vaginally can be normal.
- Severe headaches unrelieved by Tylenol or Motrin, change in vision, nausea, vomiting or dizziness
- Increased pain or discomfort
- Fever of greater than 100.4 or chills
- Foul smell to vaginal discharge
- Increased swelling or pain at the site of a vaginal or perineal tear
- Pain, redness or firm area on the breast
- If you had a cesarean birth and are having bleeding or drainage from incision site; redness around incision; or if incision is opening
- Urinary frequency or urgency, pain or burning with urination
- Pain, redness, swelling or warmth of lower legs

### **URGENT WARNING SIGNS, CALL 911 IF YOU HAVE:**

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Seizures
- Thoughts of hurting yourself or someone else
- Feeling unsafe at home / domestic violence
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there)

### **FOLLOW-UP:**

Unless your care provider instructs otherwise, please contact your care provider's office to schedule a 2-week (telehealth or in-person) and 6-week (in-person) postpartum visit

## **MENTAL HEALTH POSTPARTUM**

“Baby blues” - The "blues" is a common reaction that occurs in the days after delivery. Symptoms include anxiety, crying for no apparent reason, trouble sleeping and irritability. These symptoms usually diminish by the 10th day.

Some new parents experience more intense and prolonged symptoms such as depression, anxiety, panic, anger, confusion, or fear of harming themselves or the baby. These may be signs of a temporary and treatable illness. If you are having any of these symptoms, please notify your provider immediately.

## **MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES**

**Postpartum Support International:** <https://www.postpartum.net/> and Helpline: 1-800-944-4773  
Offers a lot of resources for new parents such as mental health provider directory, support groups, peer mentoring, and postpartum planning. Information and Helpline available in Spanish.

**Maternal Mental Health Hotline:** 1-833-TLC-MAMA. The hotline offers 24/7 real-time support and assistance for maternal mental health conditions, Available in English and Spanish, other languages available via translators. Can provide support, education, brief interventions, resources and referrals,

**Perinatal Therapists at Mount Auburn:** 617-499-5177. Our therapists are easy to access and can provide virtual support.

**Domestic Violence Support- REACH:** 1-800-899-400. This is a 24/7 hotline that provides support and a path to safety for survivors of domestic violence.

**Suicide Prevention Hotline:** 988

## **POSTPARTUM SUPPORT GROUP**

Mount Auburn Hospital offers a free, virtual and in-person option (located at 355 Waverley Oaks Road in Waltham), usually on Tuesdays. Open to all parents. Guest speakers include lactation consultants, infant sleep specialists, pelvic floor physical therapists, chiropractors and more. Email the facilitator to be added to the weekly invitation group, [ppsg@mah.org](mailto:ppsg@mah.org).

## **BREAST/CHEST FEEDING**

Engorgement - the milk "comes in" 2-4 days after birth. During this time, it's normal for the breasts to become larger, warm and uncomfortable. This usually lasts only 1-2 days. Using cold packs (after feeding your baby) can be soothing

Consult your prenatal provider before taking medication while breastfeeding

If you do not plan to breastfeed, wear a snug fitting bra and avoid stimulation to breast tissue.

Helpful online resources:

- Boston Breastfeeding Coalition Warmline: (857) 301-8259. Operated by volunteer lactation consultants offering free phone support 7 days a week
- [kellymom.com](http://kellymom.com)
- La Leche League (breastfeeding support network)
- [Zipmilk.org](http://Zipmilk.org) (find local lactation consultants near you – may be covered by insurance)

## **PERINEAL/VAGINAL CARE**

Avoid tampons, douching, and intercourse until you are seen by your provider at your 6 week follow-up appointment

Take your peri bottle home with you and use every time you use the toilet for the first 1-2 weeks. Depending on if you needed stitches and how they're feeling, you may benefit from using a sitz bath at home.

## **CONSTIPATION**

Continue with witch hazel pads (Tucks) for hemorrhoids

Drink lots of water and fluids (about 4 liters per day if exclusively breastfeeding). Increase dietary fiber with fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Berries and melons help move the bowels, bananas and starchy vegetables can cause constipation.

Prunes, prune juice, or a cup of coffee are natural laxatives and safe with breastfeeding.

Continue to take stool softener (docusate sodium) twice a day to keep stools soft. Once bowel movements are soft, comfortable, and regular you can decrease/stop taking stool softener.

You can substitute a dose of Miralax for a dose of docusate sodium. Miralax is also a stool softener with an additional mild gentle laxative effect.

If you start to become uncomfortable, you can try a gentle but stronger laxative such as milk of magnesium or bisacodyl (Dulcolax).

## **BIRTH CONTROL/CONTRACEPTION**

Helpful online resource: [bedsider.org](http://bedsider.org)

Depending on your contraceptive needs, you can discuss your options and plans with your OB provider at a postpartum visit. Estrogen containing contraceptives can decrease milk production.

Be aware that you will become fertile (ovulate and produce an egg) before you see your first period. If your partner has sperm and you don't wish to become pregnant, consider using some method of contraception every time you have intercourse, even if your menstrual cycle has not resumed.

## **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

Gradually increase your activity level. Avoid strenuous activity or exercise and swimming until at least your 6-week postpartum visit. If you had a cesarean birth, try to avoid driving for two weeks so that your body has a chance to heal. Avoid driving any time you may be using narcotic pain medication.

Continue to take prenatal vitamins as long as you are breast/chest feeding

Kegel exercises are recommended after giving birth to help strengthen the pelvic floor muscles. Talk with your provider at your 2 or 6 week follow-up appointment, to see if you may benefit from pelvic floor physical therapy.