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POSTPARTUM INSTRUCTIONS

Congratulations on your new arrival! We hope that the following information will be helpful as you return home with your new baby! If you have additional questions call our office and our staff will be glad to assist you. In addition, please remember that we encourage you to bring your baby with you to your postpartum visit so that all of our staff may meet this precious bundle!

AFTERBIRTH PAIN

Afterbirth pains become progressively more common after each pregnancy because of increasing difficulty of the uterus to return to normal size. They normally increase at the time of nursing. Except for the positional impossibility during nursing, good relief can usually be accomplished by lying flat on the abdomen without a pillow for the head. Anaprox DS 1 every 8 hours may be given at the time of discharge for uterine cramping.

ACTIVITY

Gradually increase your activity as your strength returns and you begin to feel better. Careful, slow stair climbing and reasonable lifting are acceptable. However, you should not allow yourself to become fatigued. Be sure and allow yourself rest periods as your baby rests. Let the way you feel and the obvious limitations of fatigue and discomfort be your guide. You may ride in a car a reasonable distance at any time, and you may drive after two weeks.

BATHING

You may take a tub bath or a shower and wash your hair at any time. Warm tub baths will help reduce the discomfort of stitches and hemorrhoids, and may be taken as often as you desire. C-section patients may shower after the abdominal dressing is removed or after the epidural has been removed.

DIET

Your diet should be regular and ordinary. If you are breast-feeding your baby you should be drinking plenty of fluids, eating three meals a day and continue taking your prenatal vitamins. Weight reduction diets are inappropriate while breast-feeding.

CLOTHING

If bottle feeding, wear a tight brassiere 24/7 for a week to avoid breast engorgement. If breast feeding, wear a nursing brassiere.

NON-NURSING MOTHERS

There are no medications that we are comfortable giving for “drying up” your milk. Approximately 24-48 hours after delivery there will be breast engorgement, low grade temperature and breast pain. You should take Tylenol and use ice packs as needed. Wear a tight fitting bra (24 hours a day) for about two weeks after delivery to suppress any stimulation to the nipples.

NURSING MOTHERS

Continue prenatal vitamins for as long as you nurse your baby. Wash your hands before nursing. Clean nipples with water or mild soap and water prior to nursing. Before your milk comes in, offer your baby each breast for only three to five minutes. After your milk production begins, offer your baby the first breast for fifteen minutes and supplement with the other breast for five minutes. After twenty minutes a baby is usually “playing” and not nursing. Expose your nipples to air for dryness the first 7-10 days. Apply breast cream to dry nipples. If your nipples become so tender or cracked that you are unable to nurse use nipple shields or a breast pump for several days before resuming nursing without protection on that nipple. Should your breasts become tender, hard, red or you develop a fever of 100.4 or greater, you may have developed mastitis. If this occurs, you should continue nursing from that breast (or use a breast pump), take Tylenol and apply hot compresses to that breast between nursing sessions. If after 24 hours you are no better, please call the office and speak with one of our nurses.

INTERCOURSE

This should be postponed until after bleeding stops and stitches are healed (usually 3-4 weeks). Condoms and vaginal foam may be used for contraception. Depo Provera, another option, may be given in the hospital for contraception if desired. Other birth control measures will be discussed at your six weeks checkup. Breast-feeding is **NOT** a means of birth control.

STOOL SOFTENER

Avoid constipation. You will be discharged with a stool softener you should take every day to keep the softening agent in your system. A Fleet’s enema is indicated if you have not had a bowel movement within 4-5 days after delivery. These are obtained without a prescription. If loose or diarrhea stools develop, please discontinue taking the stool softener.

EXERCISE

Exercise such as sit-ups and straight leg lifts may be performed when your baby is 3 weeks old. After a C-section, exercise should be postponed until after your checkup. Walking is a good exercise that may be started after discharge from the hospital until activities that are more strenuous are permitted.

BLEEDING

A flow will last an unpredictable number of days, gradually diminishing. This is usually finished by the time of the six weeks check up. The next normal period will ordinarily appear within eight weeks of delivery, or much later if breastfeeding.

DOUCHES

Douching is not necessary and we do not recommend it.

CIRCUMCISION

Dress as often as necessary with Vaseline gauze (available at any drugstore) or use plain Vaseline and no gauze. Be sure to pull the foreskin back before applying the Vaseline.

POSTPARTUM BLUES

Many new mothers experience this. At times you may feel that you are on an emotional rollercoaster. For most patients this is a short-lived event probably made worse by fatigue, postpartum discomfort and a perception of being overwhelmed. These feelings will subside and your attitude will become more positive. However, for some the depression is more severe, lasting longer than a few days. If this is the case, please contact our office.

REMOVAL OF STAPLES

Following a C-section if you have staples present in your incision please call the office to have them removed within 5-7 days postpartum. You may remove any steri-strips that may be present as they begin to peel up and become loose.

POSTPARTUM CHECK-UP

After you are discharged from the hospital, please call the office to make an appointment for your 6 weeks check-up. Following this postpartum exam (unless directed otherwise by your physician) your next appointment should be in 6 months, at which time a Pap smear and yearly physical will be performed to return you to an annual well exam schedule.