

CAPITAL WOMEN'S CARE DIVISION 43

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POST PARTUM INSTRUCTIONS

THE DAY YOU GO HOME

Rest the remainder of the day. Limit the amount of activity and visitors to prevent fatigue.

PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE TO SCHEDULE YOUR SIX (6) WEEK POSTPARTUM VISIT DURING YOUR FIRST WEEK AT HOME

INSURANCE/BACK TO WORK FORMS

We will be happy to assist you with forms that you may need. Please give us ample notice. Forms and letters cannot be done on a same day basis.

GENERAL ACTIVITY

Be sensible and plan your activity in moderation. If in doubt about something, don't do it. Gradually increase your activity each day, but strenuous work, heavy lifting and excessive social activity should be avoided. Some rest each day is extremely important.

STAIRS Limit to 1-2/day in the first week after a cesarean. Let someone else carry baby up and down the stairs. There are no limitations for vaginal deliveries as long as it does not contribute to excessive fatigue.

DRIVING No driving after a cesarean x 2 weeks, assure you can slam on the brakes/check you blind spots and that you are not taking narcotics nor excessively fatigued while driving.

BATHING/HYGIENE You may bathe/shower as you like. You may wish to wait until your bleeding decreases before tub baths. Remember warm sitz baths help with episiotomy/tear or hemorrhoid discomfort.

For cesarean section: keep the incision clean with water and pat dry. No dressing is necessary. Some numbness over the incision is expected, as is an occasional "pulling" sensation on the sides. Remove steristrips across your incision within the first 2 weeks of delivery. If the incision becomes red warm to touch, opens or drains, notify the office.

BLEEDING

Your bleeding may continue, slightly to moderately, for 1-8 weeks following delivery. You may notice an increase in your flow as you become more active, or after breastfeeding. You may also pass some clots. If there is any heavy bleeding, let us know.

Do NOT use tampons until you have your first period. Your first period may be heavier than normal. It is not unusual NOT to have menstrual periods until you stop breastfeeding.

SWELLING OF ANKLES

You may notice swelling of ankles/feet after delivery that may be even worse than before you delivered, especially after a cesarean section. This is normal and will gradually go away as you increase your activity and remain well hydrated

CONSTIPATION

You may experience constipation after the birth of your baby. Increase the fiber in your diet: bran cereal, green vegetables, fresh fruit, prunes/prune juice. Metamucil or miralax or milk of magnesia may be taken according to package instructions. Colace or Pericolace stool softeners may be taken 1-2/day until normal bowel movements.

HEMORRHOIDS

Hemorrhoids that develop during pregnancy or with delivery may cause you pain, itching or bleeding. They will respond to sitz baths and witch hazel pads. Preparation H or Anusol HC may also be helpful. Prevention of constipation and avoidance of straining with bowel movements is essential

AFTER BIRTH PAINS

The cramps you experience after delivery should diminish over the first 48 hours after delivery. You may experience an increase in your cramps with breastfeeding and increased activity. You can take ibuprofen and Tylenol. If this is your second/third+ baby your afterbirth pains may be more intense.

EPISIOTOMY/TEAR CARE

Your episiotomy or laceration has been repaired with absorbable sutures which will dissolve over the next 6 weeks. Sitz baths 3-4 times/day for 10 minutes at a time for the first two weeks will help with the healing of the stitches. Use dermoplast/witch hazel pads for relief of pain. Ibuprofen or Tylenol can also be used. Avoid constipation or straining with bowel movements. Occasionally, a small stitch may pass during bathing. If at any time the site of your stitches becomes excessively reddened, worsens in pain, drainage of pus occurs, foul odor develops or you have a fever >101, call us.

MOODS

Your emotions may fluctuate widely after the baby arrives. Lack of sleep may continue to make you feel tired, irritable and depressed. Get rest as you are able; nap when the baby naps. Sometimes extra assistance at home will allow you to rest more. Getting out and being with friends will be helpful. If your depression is getting worse, contact the office.

A GUIDE TO PELVIC MUSCLE EXERCISES (KEGEL'S)

Pelvic floor muscle exercises (Kegel's) improve bladder control by strengthening the pelvic floor muscle that supports the bladder. Most people who them correctly and long enough (at least 6 weeks) will note significant improvement or even cure. Improvement will last as long as you continue to do exercises.

To learn how to do the exercises, use one of these techniques to identify the pelvic floor muscle.

- Start to void. Once the urine stream has started, try to stop it. If the flow of urine stops, even slightly, the Correct muscle has been identified.

- Another technique is to squeeze the muscle in your rectum (not buttock muscle) that would prevent you from passing gas. If you feel a "pulling" or -tightening sensation, you are using the correct muscle.

- A woman also can identify the muscle by inserting a finger into her vagina and tightening her vagina around it. If she can feel this tightening, the correct muscle has been identified. Notes

- Once the correct muscle has been identified, you should not continue to squeeze it during urination.

- You should squeeze the muscle just before you know a stress is coming (like sneezing, coughing, or bending over).

- From now on, only do exercises when you are not voiding.

Regardless of how you learn to exercise the pelvic muscle, it is important to place a hand on your stomach to make sure the stomach muscle is not being contracted. Also, it is important to make sure that your buttock muscle is not being squeezed and that you remember to breathe. Once the proper muscle has been identified and can be squeezed without using the stomach or buttock muscle, you are ready to begin, in any position. Daily exercise has two functions. It help's control the pelvic muscle and it increases its strength. Then this muscle can be used to gain control over urine loss.

Each exercise consists of squeezing and then relaxing the pelvic floor muscle. Squeeze the muscle for 3 seconds, and then relax it for 3 seconds. A squeeze and a relax is considered one exercise.

Do 45 exercises each day, divided into three sessions of 15 exercises each. The exact time of day is not critical, but finding time to do them each day is. Like any type of muscle training, these exercises take time to work. There is seldom much improvement before 6 weeks.

There are three reasons people find pelvic floor muscle exercises not helpful the correct muscle is not identified, the wrong muscle is exercised (eg. the buttock or stomach muscle), or the exercises are not pursued long enough to achieve benefit.

HOW DO I DO KEGELS? BRIEF VERSION:

You can do Kegels anywhere: while you sit at a desk, wait for a bus, wash dishes, drive a car, wait in line, or watch TV. No one will know you are doing them.

Here's how you do them:

- You can feel the muscles that need to be exercised by squeezing the muscles in your genital area. It might help to pretend you are stopping a flow of urine or trying to stop from passing gas. •

Tighten these muscles and hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Then relax the muscles completely. Tighten and relax these muscles at least 10 to 20 times each day. Do these sets of exercises 10 times a day.

- Do not do these exercises while you are urinating or having a bowel movement.

You will probably have less leaking of urine after doing these exercises every day for 3 to 6 months. It is important to keep doing Kegels the rest of your life.

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