



Postpartum Instructions

Your body

- You should not be left alone at any time for the first 24 hours.
- Let us know if you soak through a pad in 1 hour or less. Massage your uterus firmly to contract it if you are bleeding excessively. If the bleeding doesn't slow

down, call **IMMEDIATELY**. It is normal if you have been lying down for a while for a large gush to occur when you stand. This large gush may soak a pad. Change your pad and if you then soak a pad in less than 1 hour, call your midwife.

- It is normal to pass clots within the first few days after birth. Particularly, if you have been lying down and then stand up. Call us if you pass multiple clots and/or the flow of your bleeding increases. You can break up the clot to look for placenta/membrane tissue which would look like a chunk of raw ground meat or white/opaque membrane type tissue. Or you can keep for your midwife to assess. Massage your uterus and feed your baby if this happens.
- Pee every few hours while you are awake as this will help with bleeding and afterpains.
- Call us if your flow has a bad odor (it should smell like your period) or is green in colour, if you develop a fever or have chills. Take your temperature if you think you may have a fever or these signs of infection. Normal body temperature is between 36.5-37.5 degrees Celsius.
- Afterpains (intense abdominal cramping after birth) are common after giving birth. They unfortunately tend to get worse with the more babies you have. It is your body's way of contracting your uterus to decrease bleeding. You can use heat packs, Tylenol, Advil and arnica.
- Get lots of rest, sleep when the baby sleeps, eat iron-rich foods to replenish your stores. Drink plenty of water to help establish a good milk supply. Ask visitors to help with food, laundry, dishes, or whatever else you may need.
- Whether you have a tear or not, your body and your pelvic floor need time to heal and rest. Avoid stairs as much as possible in the first week. If you have stairs try to only do them as much as your baby is old (ie. day 1 only up and down 1 time). We expect you be home for the first week with your feet up. This means minimal to no household duties, no grocery shopping or wandering Walmart. Your pelvic floor will thank you.
- If you had a caesarean section healing can take longer. You will not want to lift anything heavier than your baby. In the first few days you may want to use your hand or a pillow to brace the incision while moving, coughing, laughing etc. When you leave the hospital there will only be steri-strips on your incision. It is ok for these to fall off on their own. If they are not off after a week, remove them while you shower. Use a mild soap to clean your incision in the shower daily. Pat dry and keep open to the air. Signs of infection: red and swollen, green and/or foul-smelling drainage, increased pain, fever. Normal for the incision to be pink and itchy with healing. Normal for there to be some clear and or bloody drainage from the site. You will still have some vaginal bleeding but often it is less than a vaginal birth.

Your Baby

- Babies do not breath in a rhythmic pattern like we do. It is normal for them to pause for up to 20 seconds. Call your midwife if this pause is longer. If your baby is not breathing call 911. It is not normal for them to quickly breath, like a pant, for long periods of time. Call your midwife if this is occurring. If you baby turns very pale, blue or purple call 911. Some babies have facial bruising following birth, this is normal.



Their chest should always be warm and pink or appropriate skin colour for their race. Babies with darker skin should not be pale. It is normal for a baby's hands and feet to be purplish in colour for the first few days after birth.

- You do not need to check your baby's temperature unless instructed by your midwife. You can check your baby's general warmth by feeling their chest or back as it is normal for their hands and feet to feel cool. If you feel your baby is too warm, take off some blanket/clothes, recheck in 10 mins, if your baby still feels hot then check their temperature. If your baby feels cold, add blanket/clothes, recheck in 10 mins, if your baby still feels cold then check their temperature. A baby's normal temperature is between 36.5-37.5 degrees Celsius.
- Babies normally have the same amount of pees and poops as days old that they are; ie. 1 pee and poop in the first 24 hrs, 2 of each on day 2 etc. Once your baby is 5 days old they should have more than 5-6 heavier wet diapers and poops range from 1 to multiple.
- Clean the baby's cord with a Q-tip and calendula tincture or plain water twice a day or if it gets crusty. Try to keep the cord outside of the diaper so that it will dry quicker. It is normal for the cord to fall off anywhere from a few days to a couple weeks after birth. It may start to smell bad before it falls off. Once it falls off, it is normal for the base of the belly button to have dried blood or look slightly goopy. It is normal to notice spotting of blood on your baby's clothes from the cord/belly button. If your baby's belly button or around the cord starts to bleed excessively, a circle of skin around the cord/belly button becomes red or ooze green discharge; call your midwife.
- Place the baby on his/her back to sleep and keep the bulb syringe handy to suck any bubbles mucous from the mouth. It is normal for your baby to spit up mucous for the first few days after birth. It is normal for your baby to sneeze as this clears their tiny nasal passages and is not a sign of illness.
- If your baby has long nails you can trim them with small scissors or peel them while your baby is sleeping. You may want to cover them with socks or mittens if your baby is scratching their face. Avoid nail clippers as the skin is often still attached to the nail.
- Blocked tear ducts are common in newborns. If your baby has discharge coming from the eye, clean with a fresh warm cloth, massage the skin and duct on the inner aspect of the eye and put a couple of drops of breast milk in the eye each time you go to feed your baby.
- Jaunice (yellow toned skin) is common for babies after birth. If you notice jaundice in the first 24 hours call your midwife. Jaundice is common after 24 hrs of age and peaks between days 3-5. This is normal as long as your baby is peeing, pooping, and feeding well. If your baby is sleepy and doesn't wake for feeds or is not eliminating as much as he/she should (see above), please contact us. Your midwife will be doing home visits during this time and will assess your baby's colour at each visit.

Call us if you have any concerns about you or your baby.