



POST
PARTUM

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Most women spend between 1-2 days in the hospital after a vaginal birth. If you have had a cesarean birth or any complications, you will probably stay three days. You will be monitored for bleeding and fever.

POST PARTUM DISCOMFORTS

- **Afterbirth pains/Cramping** - These are due to the uterus contracting as it returns to normal size. These may be increased with breastfeeding. They usually only last a few days. We recommend changing your position often, emptying your bladder frequently, using a heating pad, and/or taking ibuprofen. They become stronger during successive and subsequent pregnancies.
- **Bleeding** - Called “lochia,” it occurs in 3 stages. The first stage is bright red, lasting for about 3 days. The second is medium red, lasting 1-3 weeks, and the third is brownish lasting invariably. It can be normal to bleed up to 6 weeks.
- **Constipation** - The pressure exerted during labor can cause the rectum to become numb and the muscles that push the bowel movements are sluggish. Try increasing your fluid intake, fiber, or using stool softeners such as Metamucil twice a day and Colace two or three times a day. You may also use Miralax.
- **Emotional Changes** - It is normal to feel exhausted, overwhelmed, and sleep deprived. Your lifestyle has changed and fluctuating hormones might cause anxiety and feelings of helplessness. These “baby blues” are common, so expect them. Usually, though, baby blues don’t last longer than a few days. If you find yourself unable to function, you have no interest in your baby, or can’t sleep or eat, you may have postpartum depression, and please call the office.
- **Episiotomy/Laceration** - Try using cold packs immediately, then dry heat, sitz baths, or a rubber ring. A Sitz bath is a clear, comfortably hot bath over your waist that promotes healing and comfort.
- **Loss of bladder function or leakage of urine** - This is often from decreased perineal muscle tone. Try doing Kegel’s exercises. In Kegel exercises, you tighten the pelvic floor muscles the way you would to stop the flow of urine or feces in midstream. The muscles will pull in together in the form of a figure 8, and the pelvic floor will lift slightly. You should hold these muscles tightly for two or three seconds and then release them. Repeat for several minutes twice a day.
- **Swollen Breasts** - If you are not breastfeeding, try ice packs, wearing a tight-fitting bra 24 hours a day and avoid stimulation.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS TO REPORT AFTER DELIVERY

- Fever over 100.4F
- Bleeding heavier than a menstrual period
- Swelling and tenderness in your legs that is worsening
- Chest pain and/or cough
- Nausea and vomiting
- Burning, pain, urgency (frequent, strong desire to void) on urination
- Painful hot and tender breasts with fever
- Perineal pain and tenderness that does not subside

Post Partum Check - At your six-week post partum visit your uterus will be evaluated to assure that it has returned to normal size, any vaginal stitches have dissolved, and the cervix has healed. This is the time you may want to discuss contraceptive options with your provider. If you had gestational diabetes during your pregnancy, you will be required to complete a 2 hour glucose challenge.