



## Postpartum Care

### Postpartum Appointments and Follow-Up

- We will see you in the office for a postpartum check-up between 2-6 weeks postpartum.
- Topics that will be covered at your postpartum visit include:
  - Incision check, if needed
  - Postpartum recovery
  - Postpartum depression screening (EPDS)
  - Postpartum hypertension
  - Contraception

### Mental Health

Your mental health is a critical part of achieving healthy babies and healthy families. If you have a history of depression, please be sure to discuss that with us. If you are feeling depressed, lacking in motivation, withdrawing from work, family, and friends, please call us immediately, or have a family member contact us.

### Nutrition

Nutrition continues to be important as your body heals from the long process of pregnancy, labor, delivery, and postpartum. As during pregnancy, drink lots of liquids and eat healthy!

### Rest

We cannot stress enough how important rest is. Your sleep cycles will be altered by your newborn, and sleep deprivation will set in quickly. You do need to rest whenever your newborn is resting. Your stamina and energy will return week by week. Begin slowly and build as you can.

### Returning to Intimacy

Resuming intimacy varies for everyone and every couple. Your body needs to heal first. It is possible to become pregnant before you see your first period after delivery. We recommend you delay sexual intercourse or use condoms until we discuss contraception at your postpartum visit.

### Physiological Changes

Bleeding will continue over 2-6 weeks. It will change from red to dark red to brown to pink. You may see clumps or clots of blood. Do not use tampons. Too much activity may result in an increase in bleeding. Please call us if you are soaking a maxi pad in an hour or less or if clots are as large as a golf ball. If you had an episiotomy or tear and needed stitches, use sitz bath 2-6 times daily to speed healing. You may use warm or cold water, whatever is most soothing to you.

We encourage patients to breastfeed, but we support our patients in whichever feeding method is best for themselves and their families.

## Breastfeeding

Here are some helpful hints for breastfeeding:

- Be patient. This is a learning curve for you and your baby.
- You need to be well hydrated to produce enough milk for your baby.
- Let your pediatrician be your guide regarding appropriate weight gain and feeding amounts.

Breastfeeding benefits for mom:

- Breastfeeding may make it easier to lose the weight you gained during pregnancy.
- Women who breastfeed longer have lower rates of type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure.
- Women who breastfeed have lower rates of breast cancer and ovarian cancer.
- Breastfeeding triggers the release of oxytocin that causes the uterus to contract and may decrease the amount of bleeding you have after giving birth.

*Please call us if you experience breast pain, redness, or signs of fever: achy joints, chills, or generally not feeling well. This could be a sign of mastitis which we can treat easily with antibiotics. You may need to have an office visit as part of the evaluation.*

## Breast Milk Benefits for Baby

- Breast milk has the right amount of fat, sugar, water, protein, and minerals needed for a baby's growth and development.
- Breast milk is easier to digest than formula, and breastfed babies have less gas, fewer feeding problems, and less constipation.
- Breast milk contains antibodies that protect infants from certain illnesses, such as ear infections, diarrhea, respiratory illnesses, and allergies.
- Breastfed infants have a lower risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- If your baby is born preterm, breast milk can help reduce the risk of many of the short-term and long-term health problem.

## Bottle Feeding

If you choose to or require bottle feeding, we recommend using breast milk or an iron fortified formula. Please talk to your pediatrician about formula options. Cool compresses or cool clean cabbage leaves may help to reduce the pain from engorgement and swelling of the breasts.



Set aside your fears and worries, mama.  
You are giving your child love,  
and that flows from the heart,  
not a bottle or breast.