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MaternalGynerations.net

Maternal Gynerations, P.C. would like to congratulate you on the delivery of your baby! These instructions should serve as a reference for you in the first few weeks after delivery. If other questions arise, we encourage you to call us.

- 1. BATHING** You may wash your hair and shower anytime. Tub baths may be taken after a vaginal birth. (Please make sure the tub is clean). If you had a cesarean, please do not immerse your incision for two weeks.
- 2. CARE OF STITCHES** The stitches that we used to repair an episiotomy or small tear will absorb; they do not need to be removed. You may be somewhat uncomfortable for approximately one week. Kegel exercises should be started a few days after delivery. This is done by tightening and relaxing the vaginal muscles. This will help increase circulation in this area and aid in the healing process. Soaking in the tub with warm water twice a day will help reduce inflammation and promote healing. Tucks, Epifoam, or Americaine spray may all be used to reduce discomfort. You may also dry your stitch area with your blow dryer on cool setting.
- 3. CESAREAN SECTION** If you deliver your baby by cesarean your healing will take longer. Remember you must recover from major surgery and cope with your newborn. Let family and friends help you while you are recovering. Getting up and moving around is beneficial as soon as possible. Initially, simple walking around the house will improve your circulation, help prevent blood clots, and promote healing, but don't overdo it. Be sure to call if your incision becomes inflamed, warm to the touch, bleeds or has any drainage. The steri strips may be removed after 7-10 days. Being in an upright position and avoiding milk products, gassy foods, and drinking through a straw the first several days may help ease painful intestinal gas that sometimes follows a cesarean section.
- 4. LOCHIA** Following birth, you will have vaginal bleeding called "lochia". This comes from your uterus contracting and returning to its normal pre-pregnant size. Initially, it will appear to be like menstrual bleeding and may have some clots. Lochia appears red in color, then will change to pinkish brown and finally to a yellowish-white or become colorless before stopping. This whole process should last from three to six weeks. Use sanitary napkins during this time, no deodorant pads or tampons. If you completely saturate one pad in thirty minutes or the flow has a foul odor, please call your doctor or nurse midwife.
- 5. DIET** During the postpartum period a well balance diet is very important, even if you don't have an appetite or are anxious to lose weight. We encourage you to drink plenty of fluids (6-8 glasses of water a day). If you are nursing, you need an additional 500 calories a day. Continue taking your prenatal vitamins and iron supplements until your six week check up. It is ok to take your vitamins longer than six weeks. Breast feeding mothers should continue their vitamins as long as they nurse.
- 6. DRIVING** We recommend no driving for two weeks after a vaginal delivery or three weeks after a cesarean section. Always use seat belts whenever you're in a car. Don't forget to buckle up baby as well!
- 7. CARE OF HEMORRHOIDS AND BOWEL MOVEMENT** After delivery, the intestines are often sluggish; constipation is a common problem. Bulk laxatives such as Metamucil or Fibercon, or stool softeners such as Colace may be used. You should also increase the amount of green leafy vegetables, salads, bran, whole grain breads and

cereals. Fruits such as apples and prunes are also helpful. And most important, drink plenty of water to avoid hard stools and constipation. Should hemorrhoids become a problem, causing pain, itching or bleeding, wipe with Tucks pads or Witch Hazel after each bowel movement; do kegel exercises and take sitz baths. Ausol, PreparationH or Corticaine cream may be used.

8. SEX Sexual relations may be resumed after active vaginal bleeding has stopped and your episiotomy is healed. This is usually at about six weeks postpartum. It is very easy to get pregnant after you have had a baby. You will ovulate before you have a period. It is important to use contraception when having intercourse. Adequate foreplay and additional lubrication (Astroglide, KY) can make intercourse more comfortable.

9. BABY BLUES Now that you have gone through pregnancy and finally have your baby in your arms, why do you feel like crying? This can be partly because of hormone changes, new role changes, and because you may be exhausted. All of this is normal yet can be disturbing you and your new family. It is helpful to allow family members to assist you in any way while you are adjusting to motherhood. For most women, minor depression lasts about a month after birth. If you feel overwhelmed with depression or it continues beyond this time, please contact your doctor or nurse midwife for assistance. If you feel that you can no longer take care of yourself or your baby, please call immediately.

10. BREAST CARE OF BOTTLE FEEDING MOTHERS There is no medication available to dry up breast milk. If you do not stimulate your breasts by nursing or expressing milk, your milk supply will not become established. You will probably have a few days when your breasts will feel tight or full, sometimes painful. During this time a well fitting bra should be worn. You may take Tylenol or Ibuprofen for pain. Ice packs applied to a breast as well as raw cabbage leaves may help to relieve engorgement. Many women will continue to have a slight discharge from the breast for several weeks.

11. BREAST CARE FOR NURSING MOTHERS During nursing, the entire areola, or brown area of the breast should be taken into the baby's mouth. Avoid letting the baby suck on the nipple only, as this will cause them to become sore. Wear a well fitting bra for support. Soap, alcohol, and most other medications are drying to the delicate skin of the breasts, and can increase the chance of sore or cracked nipples. A daily cleansing with plain water is sufficient; you do not need to wash the breast before and after feedings. A little breast milk may be applied to the areola if it becomes sore. Leave the flap down on your nursing bra, and expose your nipples to air for a few minutes after each feeding. The best way to avoid soreness is to make sure the baby latches on correctly. The lactation consultants can help with this and are available for advice after you go home. During the time that the milk is coming in, usually three to four days after delivery, prevent engorgement by nursing the baby as frequently as possible. This will also help to establish the milk supply. You can use ice after feedings and Ibuprofen every six hours for the pain. Most babies will nurse on both sides at each feeding, beginning on alternate sides at each time. If you should develop a red, painful area on your breast, especially accompanied by fever greater than 100.4, please call your doctor or nurse midwife so we can check for infection.

12. POSTPARTUM APPOINTMENTS Your obstetrical care does not end with the birth of your baby. You should schedule a postpartum in six weeks. Please call for the appointment AS SOON AS POSSIBLE to ensure availability and a timely appointment. At this visit we will do a pelvic exam, pap smear and discuss contraceptive methods with you. There are many physical and emotional needs to be met and we would like to help you with them. Call us at 770-513-4000.

13. WARNING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS The following are reasons to call us in the six week postpartum period after you have left the hospital: Fever of 100.4 or greater, severe headache, severe abdominal pain, bleeding greater than one pad an hour, or discharge with a foul odor (not like old period). It is important to remember that we are always available for any questions that you might have. Please do not hesitate to call should the need arise. We appreciate the opportunity for sharing in this experience with you and look forward to seeing you in the future.