

POSTPARTUM INFORMATION

THE MOTHER

RECOVERY

Learn to check for the hardness of the uterus, it should feel like a hard grapefruit near your belly button. If it is not firm, or if you cannot seem to feel it where it was before, you should firmly but gently rub up a contraction. Ensuring that your bladder is empty will give the uterus the space it needs to contract. Getting the baby to nurse will also help stimulate the uterus to contract.

Whenever you stand up, any blood that has collected in the vagina will come out. Nursing makes your uterus contract and you may have a gush of blood. If you completely soak a pad in half an hour or less you should contact your midwife, or call 911 and save the pads in case she wants to look at them.

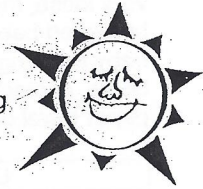
Your lochia / postpartum discharge should smell like a period. If it smells foul, if there is any pus in the discharge, or if you have an area of uterine tenderness and /or a fever, you may have an infection and you should contact your midwife.

Your whole vaginal area should be kept clean. A cold pack applied after birth will help the swelling. If it burns when you urinate, you can pour lukewarm water over yourself as you urinate. Always wipe front to back. Exposure of the perineal area to air is also good for healing.

After birth, rest. Adequate rest, a good diet and hydration are essential. Gradually increase your active hours over the first two weeks.

BREAST CARE

Exposure to sun and air is good for your nipples when you are beginning to nurse. Your breasts do not need to be washed more often than the rest of your body. It is much more important to wash your hands after going to the bathroom or before handling your breasts.



When your milk comes in, your breasts may feel uncomfortably full and hard. A hot towel applied to the breasts, or standing in the shower and allowing warm water to run over breasts will provide some comfort and may speed the let down of milk. If you feel hard lumps or hot-red painful areas in your breasts, warm compresses, massage, bed rest, and keeping the baby nursing frequently is beneficial. If your nipples are very firm and the baby is having trouble latching on, express a small amount of breastmilk prior to feeding the baby.

SUPPORT

When possible, it is important to have support of family and/or friends to assist you as you adapt to early parenting. Many women commonly experience varying degrees of emotional upheaval, particularly in the first week following the baby's birth. This may range from weepiness to feeling extremely agitated or depressed. If you feel that you are unable to cope or if you feel that you want to harm yourself or your baby, contact your midwife immediately.

Midwives of Midwifery Care of Peel & Halton Hills