

Post partum instructions

Congratulations on being a new mother !

This is a happy time for you and your family. However, it brings a lot unanticipated changes in your life which may seem overwhelming and difficult to cope with. Hopefully this can help answer some questions that may arise.

1. How can I avoid pain/ cracked nipples during breast feeding?

If you are breast feeding, then try to feed from each breast completely until its empty. Massage the base of the breast to avoid the baby sucking hard looking for milk. If breasts are still full after completing feeding, please pump and store the breast milk. You can freeze the breast milk and date it in appropriate containers. If the nipples get sore and cracked, you can use your own breast milk and apply it to the nipples. It has healing properties. If the above doesn't work, you can use A&D cream or any non medicated emollient cream and wipe off the cream with Luke warm wet cotton swab before the next feed. If they are still hurting and cracked , you can ask for a prescription for antibiotics cream (bactroban) which can be applied every 8 hours but needs to be cleaned off with a moist cotton swab before next breast feed. You may buy a "nipple shield" which is easily available in any pharmacy , which can help the baby latch on and avoid cracking of nipples. If the breasts get hard and painful, use warm compresses, massage gently and express or pump the breast milk or feed the baby directly from the breast.

2. Can I take any medications for painful breasts?

- Tylenol extra strength 500mg. 2 tab every 6-8 hours as needed.
- Motrin/Advil 600mg orally every 8 hours as needed for pain.

If the pain/ fever or chills persist, please go to the Emergency room or call your doctor.

3. I am getting fever with chills, what should I do?

Check your breasts, if they are hard and painful, see above.
If breasts are soft and you are still having fever with chills, please call your doctor.

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4. Drink plenty of fluids, 10-15 glasses of water.

Drink low fat milk, yoghurt (avoid if lactose intolerance or mil allergy)and fresh fruit juices (avoid juices if you have diabetes).

5. What foods should I avoid?

Avoid gassy foods like black beans, Brussels sprouts etc.

Avoid spicy and greasy foods.

Avoid orange juice, marinara sauce etc if they cause heartburn for you.

6. What food should I eat?

Eat healthy. Plenty of fiber and whole grain foods. Eat fresh fruits rather than juices. Eat plenty of salads. Make sure they are thoroughly washed.

7. How much activity am I permitted and what is the right posture?

When breast feeding, please sit in a chair with straight back to have back support. Use pillow or boppy pillow to support your arm while breast feeding. Avoid bending or slouching while breast feeding. It causes back ache.

Please keep legs elevated on an ottoman or another chair while feeding or sitting done to avoid swelling of legs.

8. My ankle swelling has increased, what should I do?

It is common for ankles and calves to get swollen after delivery. This happens due to redistribution of body fluids after pregnancy.

Please keep legs elevated on an ottoman or another chair while feeding or sitting done to avoid swelling of legs.

When sleeping, please keep 1-2 pillows under your feet to help decrease the swelling.

9. When should I call the doctor if my legs hurt?

If the back of your calves gets very painful and tender to touch or you see redness or if

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you have fever with chills, please call your doctor or go to the nearest emergency room.

10. I am not getting much sleep, what should I do ?

Taking care of a new born baby is very exhausting and overwhelming. If you have help from friends, relatives or significant other, PLEASE LET THEM HELP. It is tempting to try to do everything possible for the new born baby yourself, however you need sleep and rest to allow your body to recover. Try to make time to sleep when the baby is sleeping.

11. I am having vaginal bleeding. Is it normal?

You may have bleeding equivalent to your normal period for up to 1-2 weeks. It is called Lochia. It usually slows down after 2 weeks, if you still have very heavy bleeding, please call your doctor.

12. When should I consider going to the emergency room.

Please call your doctor or go to the nearest emergency room if you have any of the following

- Heavy vaginal bleeding with clots
- Fainting
- Fever with or without chills more than 101 degrees F
- Calf tenderness
- Difficulty breathing
- Severe depression, suicidal or homicidal thoughts
- Severe abdominal pain
- Uncontrollable vomiting

13. When am I supposed to go for a follow up appointment?

If you had a normal vaginal delivery, please schedule an appointment to see your doctor within 4-6 wks. if you had a cesarean section, please see your doctor 1 wk after surgery and then 4-6 wks after the first post-op appointment.