HEALTH CITY
Cayman Islands

Postnatal Care After Vaginal Delivery



This booklet will take you through your Postnatal Care After Vaginal Delivery.

What to Expect After Your Delivery

Congratulations on the birth of your baby! The postnatal period is a time of recovery and adjustment. Your body will heal while you begin caring for your newborn. Understanding what is normal and when to seek help is important.

Immediate Postnatal Period

In the first few hours after delivery:

- You will be monitored for bleeding, blood pressure, and recovery.
- Your uterus will contract (may feel like cramps).
- You may feel tired or emotional.

You will also receive support with feeding and newborn care.



Bleeding After Birth (Lochia)

Vaginal bleeding is normal and may last several weeks. It is usually heavy at first, then becomes lighter and brownish; you'll need super-absorbent period pads. Change them regularly, washing your hands before and afterwards.

You may notice that the bleeding is redder and heavier when you breastfeed. This happens because breastfeeding makes your womb contract. You may also feel cramps similar to period pain.

The bleeding will continue for a few weeks. It will gradually turn a brownish colour and decrease until it finally stops.

Contact your doctor if:

- You pass large clots
- Bleeding becomes very heavy.

Perineal Care & Stitches

If you've had stitches after tearing or an episiotomy (cut), bathe them every day to help prevent infection. Have a bath or shower with plain warm water then carefully pat yourself dry. If your stitches are sore or uncomfortable, tell your doctor or midwife.

Painkillers can help. If you're breastfeeding, check with your doctor or midwife before you buy over-the-counter painkillers.

Stitches usually dissolve by the time the cut or tear has healed, but sometimes they have to be taken out.

Going to the Toilet

At first, the thought of passing urine can be a bit frightening because of the soreness. Drinking lots of water dilutes your urine, which may make it sting less.

Tell your doctor or midwife if:

- You're finding it difficult to pass urine
- You feel very sore
- You notice an unpleasant odour.

You probably won't have a bowel movement for a few days after birth, but it's important not to let yourself get constipated. Your doctor may prescribe you a laxative and/or a stool softener.

Eat plenty of fresh fruit, vegetables, salad, wholegrain cereals and whole meal bread, and drink plenty of water. If you've had stitches, it might feel better if you hold a pad of clean tissue over the stitches when passing stool. Try not to strain.

Haemorrhoids (Piles)

Haemorrhoids (Piles) are very common after birth but usually disappear within a few days or weeks. Eat plenty of fresh fruit, vegetables, salad, wholegrain cereals and whole meal bread, and drink plenty of water. This should make passing stool easier and less painful. Try not to push or strain, as this will make the piles worse.

Breast Changes & Feeding

To begin with, your breasts will produce a yellowish liquid called colostrum for your baby. On the third or fourth day, they may feel tight and tender as they start to produce milk. Wearing a supportive nursing bra may help. Speak to your midwife if you're very uncomfortable.



Activity and Recovery

- Rest as much as possible.
- Gradually return to activity.
- Avoid heavy lifting – do not lift anything heavier than your baby.
- Avoid strenuous exercise early on. Wait until your 6-week appointment for clearance.

Emotional Wellbeing

Mood changes are common after having a baby. You may feel emotional, tearful (often called the 'baby blues'), or overwhelmed at times. This is normal and usually improves within a few days.

However, if these feelings continue, become more intense, or you feel low, unable to cope, or unable to carry out your daily activities, you may need additional support.

Please speak to your midwife or doctor if you are concerned. Seek help if symptoms persist or worsen.



Periods, Fertility & Contraception

It's hard to be exact about when your periods will start again, as everyone is different. If you bottle feed your baby, or combine bottle feeding with breastfeeding, your first period could start as soon as 5 to 6 weeks after you give birth. If you fully breastfeed (including at night) without any bottle feeding, your periods may not start again until you start to reduce breastfeeding.

Most women are advised to wait until their wound has healed and bleeding has stopped, typically around 6 weeks, before resuming sexual activity. However, this can vary depending on individual healing rather than a fixed timeline. You must always use contraception if you do not want to have another baby quickly, as you can conceive any time after birth, even if you are breastfeeding and your periods have not started again yet. It's important to start using contraception within 21 days of giving birth to avoid a new pregnancy. Talk to your midwife or doctor about a method that's best for you.

When to Seek Medical Attention

Tell your midwife, health visitor or doctor straight away if you get any of these symptoms:

Symptoms	What it could be
Pain, swelling or redness in the calf muscle of one leg	Deep vein thrombosis (DVT)
Pain in your chest, difficulty breathing	Pulmonary embolism
Sudden or very heavy blood loss, feeling faint, rapid heartbeat	Postpartum haemorrhage
High temperature, sore and tender tummy	Infection
Headache, changes in your vision, vomiting	Pre-eclampsia

FAQs

These are some common questions about Postnatal Care after Vaginal Delivery.



Q: When can I use tampons again?

A: Only after your 6-week check to reduce infection risk.

Q: Is it normal to leak urine?

A: Yes, this is common and improves with pelvic floor exercises. Your team can refer you to a women's health physiotherapist to assist.

Q: Is it normal to feel discomfort when sitting?

A: Yes, especially if you have had stitches. Using a soft cushion or changing position regularly can help reduce discomfort.

HEALTH CITY
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Health City Patient Support
maternity@healthcity.ky
Health City Connect App
healthcity.ky

HEALTH CITY
+1 345 640 4040
25 Cerasee Way, Camana Bay.
Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands