

For Mom

Bleeding

In the first 24 hours your bleeding will be like a heavy period and may have some clots. After the first 24 hours, your bleeding will slow down. If you are concerned about the amount of bleeding you should:

- empty your bladder
- lie down and massage the lower part of your abdomen to encourage your uterus to contract. Your uterus should feel firm, like a grapefruit in the lower part of your abdomen.

- put your baby to your breast

If at any time you soak more than 2 maxi pads in one hour, you should call your midwife. Your bleeding will be dark red in the first few days, changing to pink and then brown over the last weeks. It should smell like your period and not have a foul or “fishy” odour.

Temperature

You may have a rise in temperature when your milk first comes in. This subsides in about 12 hours. Other than that, call your midwife if your temperature goes above 38 °C or 99.6 °F.

Breastfeeding

A proper latch is essential for preventing sore nipples. If your nipples are sore, express some breastmilk on them and rub it in. Alternatively you can use cold tea bags, lanolin cream or calendula ointment. It is also helpful to air dry your nipples after nursing. *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* and *Dr. Jack Newman’s Guide to Breastfeeding* are good resources for extra guidance. Breastfeeding clinics are also available at most hospitals.

Bathroom

It is important to empty your bladder frequently. Urinating may sting. Try pouring some lukewarm water over your perineum as you urinate. Herbal bath, comfrey tea or salt in the water may help with healing. Wipe gently from front to back. It is important that you keep this area clean and dry. Air is also a good healer.

Tub baths are fine and your baby can go in with you right from the start. Your baby should be totally immersed in the water except for the face and dried and dressed immediately afterwards to prevent heat loss.

Rest and Fluids

Rest and fluids are essential. It is important to eat well and keep well hydrated. Try having a glass of water while your baby is feeding. Sleep whenever your baby sleeps and take as much help from others as they will give. Keep visitors to a minimum. Encourage short visits and don’t be afraid not to answer the door or the phone when you are resting. Your baby is here for good, so let friends and family get to know her/him when you are well-rested.

Exercise

It is important to continue your Kegel exercises after the birth. Doing them when you nurse/feed your baby will help you to remember. Further exercise can be added over time as your energy increases.

Emotions

If you’re feeling blue, don’t be surprised or feel guilty. Most mothers have a day or two of “blues” a few days after the birth because the demands of parenting can seem overwhelming. Sleep deprivation can contribute significantly to your blue feelings. Sleeping when your baby sleeps is very important. The blues usually pass within a few days. However, if the way you are feeling prevents you from caring for yourself or your baby, this may be an early sign of postpartum depression. Talk to your midwife!