

POSTPARTUM CARE

Congratulations!

Your new baby is finally here. Newborn babies demand a lot of love, time and attention. Parenting a newborn is incredibly hard work and may be one of the most challenging things you have ever had to do. In order to take the best care of your new baby, it is important you take care of your own health needs as well.



Learn Healthy Habits

- You might not be able to sleep through the night for awhile. Instead of trying to catch up on housework every time your baby takes a nap, try to rest whenever your baby is sleeping.
- Limit the number of visitors during the early weeks of your baby's life and the amount of time each visit lasts.
- Once you have approval from your prenatal care provider be sure to engage in physical activity every day. For example take a walk with your baby. Physical activity will help you increase your energy levels and strengthen your abdominal and back muscles.
- Avoid lifting anything heavier than your baby for atleast six weeks. If you've had a cesarean section, for up to three months.
- Accept any and all offers for help. Keep a running list of things that need to be done in case someone asks. If you can, arrange to have someone help you at home during the first week after delivery. It is best that you return to your regular activities slowly.
- Eat 5-6 small meals a day with a variety of foods and drink at least eight large glasses of water each day. Nourishing your body with lots of healthy foods will help you heal more quickly and feel better sooner.



- Avoid sexual intercourse and putting anything in the vagina until you have stopped bleeding and intercourse is not painful or uncomfortable; usually at least 4-6 weeks after childbirth. Talk to your health care provider about which type of birth control is best for you.
- Find ways to stay connected to your partner. The postpartum period can be particularly difficult for relationships. It helps to let your partner know that he isn't being replaced by the baby.

If you need additional information, contact the Family Health Line at 1-800-451-BABY (2229)

NORMAL HEALTHY MOTHERS

- It is normal to experience afterpains or cramping for about a week after giving birth, especially while nursing your baby. The uterus returns to its normal size within the first six weeks after the birth.
- It is normal to have bright red bleeding which gradually tapers off and turns darker during the three to six weeks following birth.
- It is normal to urinate more heavily (but less frequently) than in the days before birth. Urinating may be difficult for the first few days because of soreness or swelling at the vaginal opening. It may help to drink lots of fluids and run the bathroom faucet to help start urine flow.
- It is normal to experience full and tender breasts two to five days after birth when the milk “comes in.”
- It is normal to have sore muscles from positions held during labor.

Call your doctor or midwife if you have any of these symptoms in the first month after birth :

- passage of a blood clot larger than a lemon
- heavy bleeding (soaks a maxi pad in an hour)
- fever of 100.4 or higher
- problems with urination: burning, blood in urine, inability to urinate, extremely dark urine
- vaginal discharge with a very foul odor
- problems breathing
- swelling, redness, burning or discharge from your cesarean incision, episiotomy or tear
- swollen, red, hot or painful area in the leg, especially the calf
- soreness, pain or redness in one or both of your breasts, along with flu-like symptoms
- any type of visual disturbance
- frequent nausea and vomiting
- severe headaches or dizziness
- baby blues that last more than a few days or if you think you may be developing postpartum depression



Healthy Start Coalition of Miami-Dade
701 S.W. 27th Avenue, Suite 1401, Miami, FL 33135
Tel (305) 541-0210 ■ Fax (305) 541-0213
www.hscmd.org