

POSTPARTUM INSTRUCTIONS AND CHARTING GUIDE — **MOTHER** — **FIRST** 24 HOURS

Mother's Name _____ Baby's Name _____ Sex _____ MR# _____
 Date of Birth _____ Time of Birth _____ Labor: Prodromal _____ 1st st _____ 2nd st _____ 3rd st _____
 Any complications or unusual events during pregnancy: _____
 _____ EDD _____ Weeks Gestation _____
 Labs: Date _____ Results: _____ EBL _____
 Any complications or unusual circumstances during labor/birth: _____

REST: Birth is hard work. While we encourage you to get up and move about, it is essential for both yourself and your baby that you get adequate rest. **Limit your activities to taking care of yourself and taking care of your baby.** When people offer to help, let them! Sleep whenever you can. The baby will only sleep for short periods of time, and that may be the only time you will be able to sleep. Take advantage of those periods!

NOURISHMENT: In addition to recovering from the birth, your body will now begin to manufacture breast milk for your baby. You are your baby's sole source of nourishment, so you must take care of your own nutritional needs. Continue to take your prenatal supplements. You should also continue to eat a high quality diet as you did during your pregnancy, with an emphasis on calcium rich and high protein foods, with an additional 500 calories per day. Adequate fluid intake is also extremely important! Drink a minimum of 8 glasses of water per day, in addition to any other fluids. Record your meals and your fluid intake:

Check off each 8 oz glass of water:

MEAL: _____
 MEAL: _____
 MEAL: _____
 MEAL: _____
 Other: _____

PERINEAL CARE: You will be provided with a peri-bottle to rinse off your perineum after voiding. Simply fill the peri-bottle with warm water and squirt. You can blot dry with toilet paper. Your perineum may be bruised or swollen, and you might have torn, all of which may cause soreness. Hot packs or ice packs (condoms filled with water and frozen, then wrapped in sterile gauze, are ideal) applied to the perineum will help reduce swelling and bruising, and usually will feel very soothing. You can leave the ice packs on for 20 – 30 minutes at a time. The hot packs can be made with a clean wash rag soaked in hot water (bring to a boil then cool) or hot sitz bath water. You can also use herbal sitz baths, which feel good, help prevent infection, and help speed healing. You can make your own formula using various herbs such as yarrow, comfrey, oak bark, goldenseal, witch hazel, and sea salt, or buy pre-packed formulas. The herbs are mixed and about 4 ounces are added to water and simmered for 20 minutes, then left to cool. Strain into a tub of shallow water. If you have stitches you should only take one sitz bath per day. If you tore and your tear did not require stitches try to keep your legs together to facilitate healing. Allowing air to reach the perineal area for part of each day will also help with healing. It is also good to begin doing Kegel exercises. These will speed healing, help relieve soreness, and keep bladder function normal. Begin slowly, doing 10 Kegels 2 times the first day.

BREASTS: Do not use alcohol, soap, or other drying agents on your nipples. To prevent soreness, make sure the baby latches on correctly, and has as much of the areola in his/her mouth as possible. The position of the baby should be 'tummy to tummy'.

ELIMINATION: Your bladder may be numb following the birth so you may not notice you need to urinate. It is important for your bladder to be empty so your uterus can contract properly. Get up and attempt to urinate even if you don't feel the need. Normal sensation will return usually within the first 24 hours.

UTERUS AND BLEEDING: Your uterus should feel firm, like a grapefruit. This prevents excessive bleeding. If your uterus feels soft or boggy, or you soak more than one sanitary pad in 20 minutes, massage it firmly until it contracts. Nursing will also cause your uterus to contract. Blood may pool and clot during periods of rest. Note the time and size of any clots passed (i.e., quarter size, golf ball size.) We will ask you to count the number of sanitary napkins that you use. You should not bleed more than a heavy menstrual period. If you are soaking a pad within 20 minutes and massage does not slow your bleeding, call your midwife or seek emergency care.

CLOTS: Time and size _____

PADS USED: _____

TEMPERATURE AND PULSE: An elevated temperature or pulse can indicate dehydration or infection. You need to check both every 4 hours. Do not take an oral temperature within 15 minutes of eating or drinking. Report temperature over 100.4° or pulse of 100° or more.

TEMPERATURE (Every 4 hours)
 Time: _____ Temp: _____ Time: _____ Temp: _____
 Time: _____ Temp: _____ Time: _____ Temp: _____
 Time: _____ Temp: _____ Time: _____ Temp: _____

PULSE (Every 4 hours)
 Time: _____ Pulse: _____ Time: _____ Pulse: _____
 Time: _____ Pulse: _____ Time: _____ Pulse: _____
 Time: _____ Pulse: _____ Time: _____ Pulse: _____

IF YOU HAVE PAIN OR SWELLING IN ANY EXTREMITY, ESPECIALLY THE CALF, LET YOUR MIDWIFE KNOW. This may indicate a clot has formed within a vein, a serious emergency.

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS: _____

POSTPARTUM INSTRUCTIONS AND CHARTING GUIDE — **MOTHER** — **AFTER** 24 HOURS

REST: Continue to limit your activities for the first week or so. When people offer to help, let them! Sleep whenever you can. The baby will only sleep for short periods of time, and that may be the only time you will be able to sleep. Take advantage of those periods! Resume your normal activities gradually.

NOURISHMENT: Remember, you are your baby's sole source of nourishment, so you must take care of your own nutritional needs. Continue to take your prenatal supplements. You should also continue to eat a high quality diet as you did during your pregnancy, with an emphasis on calcium rich and high protein foods, with an additional 500 calories per day. Adequate fluid intake is also extremely important! Drink a minimum of 8 glasses of water per day, in addition to any other fluids. Inadequate nutrition will lead to additional fatigue and a slow recovery from the birth. You can use the same weekly diet checklist for pregnancy that was available if helps you to keep track of your nutritional requirements.

PERINEAL CARE: Continue to use the peri-bottle as needed. Any soreness should subside soon. You may continue to use ice packs, hot packs, and sitz baths as needed. Remember, if you have stitches you should only take one sitz bath per day. If you tore and your tear did not require stitches try to keep your legs together to facilitate healing. Allowing air to reach the perineal area for part of each day will also help with healing. If you have not begun doing Kegel exercises already begin now. Start with 10 Kegels 2 times the first day, and increase by 2 Kegels in each set daily. At the end of your first week postpartum you should be doing 20 Kegels 2 times daily. At this point go back to doing 10 Kegels per set but do 3 sets daily. After a couple of days, when this is easy, gradually increase until you are doing 100 Kegels per day. If at any time soreness increases let your midwife know.

BREASTS: Do not use alcohol, soap, or other drying agents on your nipples. To prevent soreness, make sure your baby latches onto your nipple correctly, with as much of the areola in his/her mouth as possible. The position of the baby should be 'tummy to tummy'. When your milk comes in your breasts may get engorged. Nurse the baby frequently. Nurse for approx. 10 minutes on the first breast, then switch to the other and allow baby to nurse as long as he/she desires (within reason.) Begin with the opposite breast at the next feeding. If you develop hard, painful lumps in your breasts, or painful red areas, contact your midwife.

ELIMINATION: Your bladder function should be normal. If you develop any pain or burning during urination let your midwife know. It is still important to keep your bladder empty for proper involution of your uterus. If you become constipated make sure you are drinking plenty of fluids, and eat whole grains, fruits, and vegetables for fiber. Consider adding prunes or prune juice to your diet if constipation is not relieved.

UTERUS AND BLEEDING: Your uterus should remain firm, like a grapefruit. This prevents excessive bleeding. If your uterus feels soft or boggy, or you soak more than one sanitary pad in 20 minutes, massage it firmly until it contracts. Nursing will also cause your uterus to contract. Blood may pool and clot during periods of rest. Note the time and size of any clots passed (i.e., quarter size, golf ball size.) Your uterus will shrink to it's pre-pregnant size over the next 4 or 5 weeks. The amount of bleeding should gradually decrease until there is only a slight whitish discharge. If at any time your bleeding becomes bright red again it is an indication you have over done it and the placental site has 'broke open', much like any scab would do. If this happens you should make sure your uterus is contracting well, and **GET MORE REST**. If the bleeding doesn't slow, or the blood develops a foul odor, or if your uterus becomes unusually painful, call your midwife. While infections are rare they can occur.

CLOTS: Time and size _____

TEMPERATURE AND PULSE: An elevated temperature or pulse can indicate dehydration or infection. You should continue to check both twice a day for the next week, or any time you do not feel well. Do not take an oral temperature within 15 minutes of eating or drinking. Report temperature over 100.4° or pulse of 100° or more.

TEMPERATURE
 Day 2: AM Temp: _____ PM Temp: _____
 Day 3: AM Temp: _____ PM Temp: _____
 Day 4: AM Temp: _____ PM Temp: _____
 Day 5: AM Temp: _____ PM Temp: _____
 Day 6: AM Temp: _____ PM Temp: _____
 Day 7: AM Temp: _____ PM Temp: _____

PULSE
 Day 2: AM Pulse: _____ PM Pulse: _____
 Day 3: AM Pulse: _____ PM Pulse: _____
 Day 4: AM Pulse: _____ PM Pulse: _____
 Day 5: AM Pulse: _____ PM Pulse: _____
 Day 6: AM Pulse: _____ PM Pulse: _____
 Day 7: AM Pulse: _____ PM Pulse: _____

IF YOU HAVE PAIN OR SWELLING IN ANY EXTREMITY, ESPECIALLY THE CALF, LET YOUR MIDWIFE KNOW. This may indicate a clot has formed within a vein, a serious emergency. **DO NOT RUB OR MASSAGE THE SORE AREA.**

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS: _____

PLEASE RECORD ALL INFORMATION! Your midwife will review all charted information at your postpartum visits.

Reviewed by _____ Date _____ Time _____
 Midwife _____ Phone numbers _____