



# PHYSICIANS AND MIDWIVES POSTPARTUM CLASS

## TOPIC

## NOTES

### Postpartum Visits

Visit schedule:

- All patients can expect to have a visit at 6 weeks postpartum
- Some factors may necessitate sooner appointments:
  - 1-week visit if you experienced any blood pressure issues during pregnancy or delivery
  - 2-week visit if you had a C-section or have a history of anxiety or depression

### Healing Post-Delivery

- Vaginal deliveries
  - Approximately 6 weeks to heal from vaginal tearing
  - Sutures should dissolve on their own
- C-sections
  - Incisions close within 2 weeks
  - Sutures should dissolve on their own
  - Staples may be removed in hospital/office within a week after delivery
  - Internal healing takes at least 6 weeks
- Vaginal bleeding might occur intermittently for up to 6-8 weeks, regardless of delivery type

### Body Changes

- Night sweats
- Leg swelling
  - Contact our office if one side is more swollen
- Weight loss
  - Often slow at first; breastfeeding may help
  - Eat healthy and exercise when it is safe to do so
- Constipation
  - Staying hydrated, walking, and eating fiber can help
  - OTC medication that is safe to use while breastfeeding: Colace (100 mg up to three times a day) or Miralax (once a day until you have a bowel movement)
- Milk supply
  - Generally comes in around day 4 postpartum
  - Breasts may be engorged/uncomfortable but should not be red or painful
  - Tight bras, cold compresses, and cabbage leaves in your bra can help decrease milk production

### **Body Changes (Continued)**

- Watch for heavy bleeding or signs of infection and call our office at (703) 370-4300 if you're concerned

### **Breastfeeding**

- You need 500 extra calories a day for breastfeeding
- At first, feed on cue when baby seems hungry (generally every 2-3 hours) in 10-30 minute sessions
- Uterine cramps may worsen during feeding
- Leaking
  - Oversupply/Undersupply
- Pain, tiredness/fatigue, or strong emotions (positive or negative) are normal during milk let-down
- Nipple soreness
  - Overuse
  - Poor latch
  - You should not have pain throughout the entire feeding session; if you do, seek assistance
- LactMed lists medications that are safe to use when breastfeeding
  - [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK501922](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK501922)

### **Breastfeeding & Returning to Work**

- Start pumping halfway through your time at home with the baby
  - Pump for an additional 10-20 minutes approximately 10-30 minutes after feeding baby
  - You will make the most milk in the morning
- Check your state and employer rules to determine your rights as a breastfeeding mother

### **Feelings After Childbirth**

- Baby blues
  - Feelings of sadness, worry, or anxiety that start in the first few days after giving birth
  - Resolves within 2 weeks without any treatment
- Postpartum depression (PPD)
  - 1 in 7 women experience PPD
  - Increased risk: history of depression or anxiety; baby admitted to NICU; difficult delivery; lack of support; trouble breastfeeding
  - Treatments include therapy and medication
  - If you suspect PPD, please contact our office as soon as possible - do not wait until next scheduled appointment
- Experiencing Baby Blues or PPD does not make you a bad mother

### **Feelings After Childbirth**

- Other resources
  - [www.postpartumva.org](http://www.postpartumva.org)
  - [www.postpartum.net/locations/virginia](http://www.postpartum.net/locations/virginia)

### **Lifestyle Habits**

- Hydration is important - especially for breastfeeding!
- Walking is the best exercise in the first 6 weeks
  - Fit4Mom - health, wellness, and fitness programs for new moms
  - [www.fit4mom.com](http://www.fit4mom.com)
- Prioritize sleep
- If you are returning to work, check with your employer about maternity benefits, paperwork, and lactation laws

### **Sex and Family Planning**

- Wait 6 weeks to have intercourse
- Ovulation less likely if breastfeeding a baby less than 6 months old every 4-6 hours, or if periods have not returned
- We recommend waiting at least 6-12 months before conceiving again
- Review options and contraception at 6-week postpartum visit
- OTC lubrication can help with vaginal dryness/lacerations

### **Future Health**

- All patients asked to follow up at 6 months postpartum for annual exam
- Additional testing may be required
  - Gestational diabetes - 2-hour Glucose Test at 6-week postpartum visit
  - Abnormal pap smears - repeat abnormal pap smear or colposcopy may be done at 6-week visit
- Please discuss any diagnosis of diabetes or hypertension with Primary Care Provider

### **Additional Resources**

- "Nobody Told Me About That: The First 6 Weeks" by Ginger Breedlove
- Virginia Hospital Center
  - Postpartum support groups
  - [www.virginiahospitalcenter.com/classes-events/support-groups/](http://www.virginiahospitalcenter.com/classes-events/support-groups/)