



DANDELION MIDWIFERY
MICHELE BUCHMANN BA RM
(250) 590.7770 TEL
(250) 590.7774 FAX

After the baby is born! KEEPING YOUR MIDWIFE INFORMED: If you have any problems, call a midwife immediately. You can expect to see a midwife at your home every day for the first 2-3 days and then gradually decreasing over the next month.

Your Emotions: Up to 80% of women get the 'blues' within the 1st 3 to 4 (sometimes up to 10) days after birth. You may be surprised by sudden periods of crying, anxiety, quick mood changes and irritability. The good news is that these feelings usually don't last long and you can do something about them;

- Have regular breaks during the day
- Talk to others about how you feel
- Rest as much as possible
- Take part in activities you enjoy
- Accept help from others
- Take time for relaxing exercise, even a simple walk
- Remember that household chores can wait while you get to know your new baby

IF YOU ARE STILL EXPERIENCING NEGATIVE FEELINGS after the first 2 weeks after childbirth, you could have postpartum depression or anxiety which occurs in about 20% of mothers. You may need help. It is important to let your midwife know how you are feeling.

Rest: Get plenty of rest for the first two weeks. You will be able to care for yourself and the baby, but don't expect too much of yourself. You will need someone to substitute for you in general household duties (cooking, cleaning, laundry, shopping and caring for older children) for at least one week. Rest when the baby is sleeping and keep visitors to a few close friends or relatives who are willing to help. Remember that fatigue decreases your breast milk supply and your ability to cope with these new added responsibilities.

Baths & Showers: Sitting in a warm *sitz* bath for 10-15 minutes several times a day will aid in healing of stitches, keeping your perineum clean, and decreasing discomfort from haemorrhoids or stitches. Thoroughly clean and rinse the tub before using. Have a shower to cleanse your body, rather than washing yourself in the tub and then soaking in the same water. Showers are also useful to relieve breast discomfort associated with engorgement.

Vaginal Bleeding: Normal lochia (flow) lasts for 3 to 4 weeks though can continue until 6 weeks in some women. Generally, during the first 24 hours after birth, the bleeding should be like a heavy period. By the third or fourth day it will have thinned and become *reddish/ brown* in colour. By the tenth day it is often like a pale, pink, watery fluid, spotting enough to require a light pad. If after the third day the bleeding becomes bright red and heavy again, it is often a sign that you are overactive and need to slow down. *Sometimes a sudden but transient increase in bleeding may occur between day 7 to 14. This is sometimes related to the shedding of the old placental scar from the uterine wall and should stop within 1 to 2 hours.* If you should bleed heavily at any time (ie; soak through a pad in one hour or less); you must empty your bladder, lie down with an ice bag on your abdomen, and nurse the baby. Massage your uterus and ensure your uterus stays firm. If this does not stop the bleeding, call your midwife.

Activity & Exercise: Listen to your body and let it be your guide to activity and exercise. You should limit your stair climbing for the first week. You may go out for a ride or dinner when you begin to have “cabin fever” and drive your car in two weeks. Begin Kegel exercises within the first week and abdominal exercises when you feel ready after delivery. Start going for short walks 10-14 days after the birth. Remember that you have to get home again, so make the first walks very short, and then gradually increase the distance each day.

Sex: Again, listen to your body. Women vary greatly in when they feel like having intercourse again: some will start in 2 weeks, others not for 6 months depending on how the birth was, amount of trauma to the perineum, how much time is spent with the baby, how tired you are and what your relationship with your partner is like. Whatever you feel is right for you. Talk to the midwives as you feel the need. Breastfeeding can also reduce women’s natural vaginal lubricant – a synthetic lubricant, such as ‘astro glide’ can be used.

Contraception: You CAN become pregnant again soon after childbirth even if you are breastfeed

Note:

Combined oral contraceptives (oestrogen and progesterone) can suppress milk supply & is not recommended if breastfeeding. The Progesterone only pill is safe during breastfeeding however it is best delay starting this until breastfeeding is well established.

Natural family planning - methods which depend on predicting the time of ovulation by use of basal body temperature or assessment of cervical mucus cannot be used until regular menstrual cycles have resumed.

Common Postpartum Discomforts

Constipation: You will probably have your first bowel movement within three days after delivery. Drink plenty of fluids (6-8 large glasses each day), and eat a diet high in fibre; raw fruits and vegetables, bran and whole wheat products.

Sometimes it may be necessary to use a gentle stool softener but you must be careful not to become dependant on this. Only use stool softeners if necessary and for no longer than a few days.

Stitches & Haemorrhoids:

Sit in a tub of warm water several times a day to soothe your perineum whether the discomfort is due to stitches, bruising from birth, or haemorrhoids.

You may also apply ice packs or witch hazel compresses (Tucks) to the area

Difficulty passing urine:

Try standing in a warm shower or sitting in a tub of warm water. Leave the water running in the tub or spray warm water over your perineum (front to back) with your squeeze bottle. *If the above methods fail and you are still unable to void call a midwife

Breast Engorgement & tenderness: When your breasts begin to feel heavy, you may find comfort in a good supportive bra. The extreme fullness (due to engorgement of the tissues as the milk comes into the breasts) may be noticed on the second or third day. The discomfort usually lasts for 12-24 hours

Place cool, washed cabbage leaves directly on and around the breasts and hold in place with a bra. Do not leave in place for longer than 2 hours.

Nurse the baby frequently and apply heat in the form of a shower or warm towels prior to breastfeeding to aid the letdown reflex.

Express a few drops of colostrum or breast milk after each feeding and let your nipples air dry for 20 minutes.

Ensure that the baby is accurately positioned at the breast and change breastfeeding positions, as this will rotate the pressure area on the nipple. Nipple tenderness as the baby

latches on and shapes the nipple is a normal sensation. The discomfort should be gone after the initial 8-10 seconds of breastfeeding.

If the pain persists, check the baby's position carefully and correct as needed.

After Pains: There is usually little or no cramping pain after your first baby. With second or subsequent babies, the after pains may be severe for the first few hours after the birth. These contractions will diminish in intensity and are often easy to handle by 24 hours after the birth.

Urinate frequently: every 1-2 hours even if you don't feel the need. This reduces tension on the uterus.

Black Haw will significantly reduce the pain in the first few hours. Have the herb capped and ready before the birth or purchase in tincture format.

Take 4 size 00 capsules as soon as the after pains gain your attention. The pain should diminish within 20 minutes. Take 4 more when the pain returns, up to 24 capsules during the first day. Reduce the dosages with each day as the pain severity decreases. Usually Black Haw is not needed by the third or fourth postpartum day.

Many women prefer to use acetaminophen (Tylenol ®) or ibuprofen (Advil ®). Ibuprofen is particularly effective in reducing the discomfort of after pains. Take 400 mg to 600mg every 4 hours as needed for the first few days after the baby is born.

Perineum Discomfort:

COMFREY ROOT and GINGER ROOT: Put a handful of dried or fresh comfrey and 6 large slices of fresh ginger root into 1 1/2 litres of water and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 45 minutes. Add 6-10 leaves of fresh comfrey if available, during the last 5 minutes. Let the decoction cool until the water is just cool enough to touch with your hands. Dip a clean diaper or hand towel into the brew, wring it out, and apply as warm as tolerable to the perineum. Replace the poultice once it cools. Repeat this process for 1/2 an hour at least twice daily. Apply more frequently for severe swelling or soreness. Keep the brew in the pot and reheat as needed. Replace the decoction after three days. You may also add this decoction to your bath water 1-2 times daily, keeping the level of the bath only a few inches deep to avoid diluting the decoction too much. A sitz bath is also excellent for this purpose.

HONEY: Buy a small new jar of honey and put it close to your toilet. When you change your pad, swab honey onto the peri pad. The honey will soothe and heal the perineum. Its antibacterial qualities will help prevent infection.

GREEN CLAY: This is healing clay, which can be applied directly to the perineum after bathing or liberally applied to your clean menstrual pads for the first 1-2 weeks. Green clay is also excellent for healing the caesarean scar. Apply liberally to the clean scar.

Stress:

Stress causes your body to use calcium faster. Liquid calcium supplements are more readily absorbed. Drink 1-2 cups of CALCIUM TEA daily. If you use a pill form, ensure that it has a 1:1 ratio with magnesium to ensure absorption and usage. Calcium helps your muscles, nerves and mind to relax. It will calm you and help you to sleep, or to rest when the baby sleeps.

Sleeplessness:

VALERIAN ROOT POWDER:

Many mothers find that they are unable to sleep or "let go" in the first or second week after birth. If you find that you are unable to sleep when everyone else is sleeping, take 2 capsules of Valerian. To counteract the strong, unpleasant odour, take with food or drink.

WARM MILK

contains an amino acid called tryptophan, which aids in relaxation.

REST when the baby sleeps, even if it is mid-day and household duties remain undone. A relaxed and rested mother is more important than a clean house!

Breast Infection:

POKE ROOT:

Pokeroot tincture: 4-6 drops every 2 hrs for 6 hrs (4 times in total). Then, 4 drops every 6 hrs for the next 24-36 hrs. Capsules: 2 capsules 3 times daily for 3 days The homeopathic form of pokeroot is Phytolaca. It is also effective in treating breast infections.

ECHINACEA:

Combined with above tincture, 5-10 drops every 2 hours for 2 days, or until infection subsides.

VITAMIN C:

1000 mg 3-4 times daily.

HOT COMPRESSES:

Use a towel soaked in hot water and wrap the breast or try soaking towel in the following brew:

SLIPPERY ELM powder, COMFREY ROOT, and GINGER powder:

Combine and simmer with water for 20 minutes. Soak a towel in the brew and apply to the breast. The brew can be used for several applications.

A POULTICE of grated, raw POTATO, can draw out the heat of the inflammation, and unblock plugged ducts. Apply directly to the affected breast, cover with a clean cloth and change when dry.

GENERAL CARE IF YOU HAVE A BREAST INFECTION:

Check the baby's eyes and skin. If scaly, wash area, change bedding and wash hands. Check the baby's mouth for thrush and your nipples for yeast. A yeast infection transferred between the mother and baby is a possible cause of breast infection. Contact the midwife for a diagnosis and treatment of yeast. Drink lots of fluids and rest as much as possible. Stay cool and eat cooling foods such as watermelon. Avoid cheese, meat, greasy foods, coffee and alcohol. Fatigue can prolong a breast infection. If you have a fever or flu-like symptoms, acetaminophen (Tylenol ®) or ibuprofen (Advil ®) may be taken.

Encourage the baby to feed frequently on the affected breast. Pump the breast if the baby is not draining it well. Change the baby's position when feeding to allow drainage of different milk ducts. Gentle massage of the affected area of the breast can also help to clear the plugged duct.

GENERAL POSTPARTUM RECOVERY:

BOB'S IRON FORMULA: keep taking this to boost your iron levels

ARNICA: is a homeopathic remedy used for physical shock and trauma. It aids in healing and recovery. Take 3-4 pills of Arnica every few hours, starting immediately after the birth, for the first

12 hours. Arnica can be given to the baby if the birth was stressful. Give 1 pill on the baby's tongue every few hours for the first 12-24 hours to aid in recovery (up to 4 pills total).

WUCHI PAI FENG: sometimes called "chicken eggs" is an ancient Chinese remedy used to tone the blood and energy, warm the uterus and nourish the mother in her postpartum. It is particularly useful if you feel nervous, tense or exhausted. 12% of this formula is made from chicken. Take 10 pills 2 times daily for 1-2 months. Do not take this remedy if there are any signs of infection anywhere in the body. Do not take if you have a fever, cold and flu, or if your breasts are tender and pink beyond normal tenderness of engorgement. Do not take if your lochia smells bad or if your uterus is painful to touch (other than normal after pains).

FLORADIX: is a useful tonic during the first few postpartum weeks if your haemoglobin is low due to blood loss during the birth.

HEMAPLEX 50 is another excellent supplement for low haemoglobin. It can be purchased at a health food store.

AN MIEN PIEN: A Chinese remedy for sleeplessness in pregnancy or postpartum. Follow directions on the box and wash the outer red coating off the pill with cold water.

Supporting Milk Production:

BLESSED THISTLE: brewed as a tea helps with milk production. Ensure that the baby is well positioned at the breast and nursing frequently. Exhaustion and lack of food or fluids will decrease your milk supply

BLESSED THISTLE and FENUGREEK : In capsule form this helps increase milk supply. 3 capsules of each/ 3 times a day. Once adequate milk supply is reached slowly decrease capsule intake. Once milk supply decreases slightly this dosage must be maintained throughout.