

## GOING HOME AFTER DELIVERY

Having a baby is an exciting and, at times, stressful time. It is important to take care of your body after having a baby. The first days after giving birth are for rest and recovery<sup>8</sup>. Women of an unhealthy weight may have had this:

- Episiotomy or vaginal tear
- Preeclampsia & eclampsia
- Gestational diabetes



After giving birth, women of an unhealthy weight are at a higher risk of having<sup>1,2-3</sup>:

- Deep vein thrombosis (blood clot)
- A pulmonary embolism (blocked blood vessel in the lungs)
- Problems breathing (pulmonary infections)

Walking helps lower the risk of having these health problems.<sup>1,2-3</sup>

Give yourself time to recover from giving birth. For the next few days, you may feel tired, have vaginal soreness and/or breast engorgement.<sup>7</sup> You will have bright red vaginal discharge (also called lochia). The vaginal discharge will change to a lighter color and flow in the next few weeks.<sup>7</sup> If you are breastfeeding, you will feel cramps like your period. This is normal.<sup>7</sup>

### TIPS OF THE WEEK

- The first few days after birth are a time for rest and recovery.
- Walk to help prevent blood clots and lung infections.
- Walk around the house for 5 minutes each day.

Call your doctor if you:<sup>2,5</sup>

- Pass blood clots bigger than a golf ball
- Have a fever over 100.4° F
- Have breast pain with redness
- Have foul-smelling vaginal discharge
- Feel pain when urinating
- Soak a pad within 1 hour
- Have leg pain or swelling

Try not to get back to work or do any housework right now.<sup>4</sup> The first few days after birth are a time for rest and recovery. Ask for help around the house to help you regain your energy and strength. The better health you are in, the better care your baby will receive.

If you had an episiotomy or vaginal tear:<sup>6</sup>

- Set ice packs on the vaginal area to lower pain & swelling. Using a sitz bath will also help.
- Change pad every 2-4 hours.
- After using the bathroom, use a squirt bottle to spray warm water over the vaginal area. Pat the vaginal area dry.



If you had gestational diabetes:<sup>8</sup>

- Gestational diabetes usually goes away after giving birth. Your glucose levels will be tested at 6-12 weeks after giving birth.
- Eat healthy and walk to lower the risk of having diabetes. This will also help prevent gestational diabetes in future pregnancies.
- Follow your doctor's instruction if medicine was given.

Here are a few other things you can do:

- Start walking around the house, 5 minutes each day.
- Take pain medicine as directed by your doctor. This will help you move around to take care of the baby.
- Wear an abdominal binder to help provide belly support.

## RESOURCES:

### WOMEN'S HEALTH, LABOR & BIRTH

[womenshealth.gov/pregnancy/childbirth-beyond/labor-birth.html](http://womenshealth.gov/pregnancy/childbirth-beyond/labor-birth.html)

### POSTPARTUM EXERCISE: IS YOUR BODY READY

[babycenter.com/0\\_postpartum-exercise-is-your-body-ready\\_196.bc](http://babycenter.com/0_postpartum-exercise-is-your-body-ready_196.bc)

### YOUR BODY AFTER BABY: THE FIRST 6 WEEKS

<http://www.marchofdimes.org/pregnancy/your-body-after-baby-the-first-6-weeks.aspx>

### PREGNANCY – RECOVERING FROM BIRTH

[womenshealth.gov/pregnancy/childbirth-beyond/recovering-from-birth.html](http://womenshealth.gov/pregnancy/childbirth-beyond/recovering-from-birth.html)

## APPS:

### MOMMACISE

[mommacise.com](http://mommacise.com)

## BLOGS:

### RONI'S WEIGH

[ronisweigh.com/pages/my-story](http://ronisweigh.com/pages/my-story)

### ESCAPE FROM OBESITY

[escapefromobesity.net/2008/10/habit-week-challenge-week-2-move.html](http://escapefromobesity.net/2008/10/habit-week-challenge-week-2-move.html)

### FIT4MOM

<http://fit4mom.com/blog/motivating-mom-hot-mama-lisa>

## VIDEO:

### RECOVERY AFTER GIVING BIRTH

[youtube.com/watch?v=Bcxb7qVyWQY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bcxb7qVyWQY)

### GET INSPIRED BY THESE FIT MOMS!

[workoutmommy.com/get-inspired-by-these-fit-moms/](http://workoutmommy.com/get-inspired-by-these-fit-moms/)



## REFERENCES:

1. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. FAQ labor, delivery and postpartum care: cesarean birth (2011).
2. March of Dimes (2013). Warning signs after birth.
3. Vieira de Pava L, et al. Maternal obesity in high-risk pregnancies and postpartum infectious complications. *Rev Assoc Med Bras* 2012;58:453-458.
4. Medline Plus. Postpartum care. Video: Your recovery after a vaginal delivery, parts 1 & 2. Retrieved from <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/postpartumcare.html>
5. Mayo Clinic. Postpartum care: what to expect after vaginal delivery. Retrieved from <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/labor-and-delivery/in-depth/postpartum-care/art-20047233>
6. Storck S & Zieve D. MedlinePlus. Episiotomy – aftercare. Retrieved from <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/patientinstructions/000483.htm>
7. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health. Pregnancy: Recovering from birth. Retrieved from <http://www.womenshealth.gov/pregnancy/childbirth-beyond/recovering-from-birth.html>
8. Kitzmiller JL, et al. Gestational diabetes after delivery: short-term management and long-term risks. *Diabetes care* 2007;30:S225-S235.