



**UNIVERSITY MIDWIFERY ASSOCIATES**  
*Postpartum Information*

***Important Phone Numbers:***

University Center for Women's Health .....	272-2245
Women's Faculty and Midwife Clinic .....	925-4940
Belen First Choice Clinic .....	861-1013
Los Lunas First Choice Clinic .....	865-4610
Albuquerque Indian Health .....	248-4051
Westside Women's Health .....	272-2900
University Hospital - OB Triage .....	272-2460 and 272-9026

***Postpartum Follow-up Examinations:***

Please make an appointment for your postpartum exam soon after you are discharged from the hospital. During the six week postpartum appointment a breast exam, and sometimes a pap smear, will be done and birth control will be offered. The midwives like to see their patients 6 - 8 weeks after the birth if there were no complications.

1. Patients who had C-sections should be seen at two weeks for an incision check, and at 6 - 8 weeks for the regular exam by the midwife.
2. Albuquerque Indian Health, other Indian Health patients, and their newborns should be seen by their physician or Nurse Practitioner the week after the birth.
3. You may make an appointment to see your midwife before 6-8 weeks after the birth if you like.

***Postpartum Warning Signs***

If any of these warning signs occur, please call your midwife at the clinic or OB Triage (272-2460).

- Heavy vaginal bleeding and/or large (lemon-sized) blood clots
- Strong bad odor to vaginal discharge
- Severe abdominal pain
- Breasts that are sore, red, or hot to touch
- Fever more than 101° F
- Severe headache (does not go away with Tylenol)

## *Care at Home for the Mother*

### **Activity and Rest**

Labor is hard work! It is important for your body to recover. It may take 6 - 8 weeks after the birth to get your energy back. Try to sleep or rest whenever your baby sleeps especially the first week. Accept help from family and friends for childcare, shopping, cooking and cleaning. Your vaginal bleeding will be heavier if you do too much.

### **Nutrition, Vitamins and Iron pills**

A new mother needs to keep eating well. Drink a lot of water (8 -10 glasses) every day. Good eating and drinking will help increase your energy. It will also help prevent infections and heal stitches. A good diet is really important for breastfeeding. Every mother should keep taking her vitamins. Talk to your midwife about them when you see her 6 - 8 weeks after the birth.



### **Emotions and the “Baby Blues”**

Many mothers cry now and then in the first few weeks after the baby’s birth. This is called the “baby blues,” you are happy one moment and crying the next. It is normal. Sometimes changes in hormones after birth cause it. The “blues” last a few weeks. However, it is not normal to cry or feel sad or depressed all the time. This may be “postpartum depression” which needs treatment. Talking with friends or family about your emotions helps a lot. Talk to your midwife. Do not suffer in silence.

- Healthy Families .....842-9911
- Family Dimensions .....292-1554
- Birthing From Within ..... Pam England, CNM 702-1950

### **Hemorrhoids and Constipation**

Hemorrhoids are swollen veins around your rectum, where the poop comes out. Many women have them in pregnancy and after pushing the baby out. They can be very painful or bleed when you poop. Tucks or Witch Hazel compresses can help decrease the pain. Keep them in the refrigerator. Soaking in warm water 3 - 4 times a day for 15 minutes at a time will also help shrink the hemorrhoids. All new mothers need to avoid constipation, hard poops, but it is more important for moms with hemorrhoids. To stay regular every day, drink 8 -10 glasses of water or drinks without caffeine. Eat food high in fiber, like raisins, prunes, bran, cereals, muffins, beans, raw fruits and vegetables. You can also try a metamucel if you still don’t have soft, regular poop.

### **Uterus and “After Birth Pains”**

Right after the birth your womb should squeeze to the size of a grapefruit. You should be able to feel the top of it just below your belly button. It usually takes 6 weeks for the womb to return to the size it was before pregnancy. Many women experience cramping like a period for a few days after the birth. This happens more to breast feeding mothers when feeding. Your body is helping your womb return to its normal size and prevents heavy bleeding. Try Ibuprofen (400 - 600 mg every 4 - 6 hours) to help with cramping. Red Raspberry leaf tea is also good to help the cramping. Drink it as much as you like. A warm bath or shower or a hot water bottle on your belly may also comfort you.

### **Vaginal Bleeding (Lochia)**

After the birth you will have heavy bleeding like a period. Each day the flow should become less. The color will change from bright red to brown and then cream color. This can last up to 6 - 8 weeks after the birth. The bleeding should not have a strong odor. If the bleeding becomes very heavy - you may be doing too much - SLOW DOWN. Emptying your bladder every 2 hours is also helpful in decreasing the amount of vaginal bleeding. It is also normal to pass small blood clots the size of raisins or grapes:

***If the clots are large like lemons or oranges or if bleeding needs more than 2 pads per hour, CALL OB Triage (272-2460) and speak with the midwife.***

### **Vaginal Area and Suture Care**

This area will be very tender after the birth. You may have some burning the first time you pee after the delivery. Try peeing in the shower or bathtub or use the squirt bottle filled with warm water to help the discomfort. Using the squirt bottle after you pee or poop is helpful in keeping the area clean. Always wipe front to back after using the toilet. Ice packs to the area for the first 24 hours after the birth can decrease pain and swelling. After 24 hours, switch to warm water soaks or sitz baths 2 - 3 times a day for 15 - 20 minutes. If you have stitches - the good news is that they will absorb into your skin and do not need to be removed. You can use Tylenol (325 - 650 mg every 4 - 6 hours) or Ibuprofen (400 - 600 mg every 4 - 6 hours) for pain of the vaginal tear or episiotomy. Avoid douching and tampons. Do not put anything into the tub water such as bubbles.

### **Sexual Intercourse**

Once the bleeding has stopped and your vaginal area is not sore, it is all right to make love. For most women, this is around 3 - 4 weeks after birth. Some women find it is more comfortable to make love for the first time if they are positioned on top of their partner. A water-soluble lubricant like K-Y jelly may help make sex more enjoyable. For some breastfeeding mothers, the vagina does not become as wet as usual when making love. Do not be surprised if you leak milk when you have an orgasm. This is common in breastfeeding mothers.

Often a new mother does not have much interest in sex for awhile after the birth of the baby. However, the father/partner is greatly interested. Be sure to keep talking about these differences. It is also a good idea to decide now what birth control you are going to use before making love. Remember you can get pregnant very quickly after the birth, even before you have your first period. If you have not chosen a method before your 6 - week exam with your midwife, use foam and condoms as protection. They can be purchased at any drug store.



need to hand press some milk in a warm shower so the baby can latch onto your nipple. Sore nipples are also common the first week after the birth. Be sure the baby is "latching on" correctly and that the areola (brown area), not just the nipple, is well inside the baby's mouth. Remember to break the suction with your finger before removing the baby from the breast.

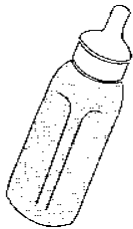
### **Breastfeeding Mothers**

Congratulations for breastfeeding your baby. The first few days after the birth you will make "colostrums" which is very rich in vitamins and antibodies for your baby. Two to four days after the birth is when your milk will "come in." Your breasts will become very large and full; it can be uncomfortable for some women and generally lasts 24 - 36 hours. Continue to breastfeed, but you might

Let the nipples dry before putting on your bra. Creams like Lansinoh (Albertsons, Smiths, and Walgreens) applied to the nipple can also help with healing. Breastfed babies feed about every 1½ to 3 hours. The more the baby eats the more milk your body will make. Watch for red, hard, and painful areas on your breast. These could be plugged milk ducts or a breast infection called “mastitis.” If you see this, keep breast feeding your baby, apply warm compresses, and massage the area well to help it drain. If you have a fever more than 101° F, call your midwife. Mothers who have had a c - section may want to try different positions for breastfeeding so there is not too much pressure on the incision. The “football hold” and side-lying positions are good for this.

### Breastfeeding Resources

<b>UNM Lactation Clinic</b> .....	272-0480
<b>Body, Mind and Spirit</b> <a href="http://www.bodymindandspiritabq.com">www.bodymindandspiritabq.com</a> .....	232-2772
<b>La Leche League of Albuquerque</b> .....	821-2511
<b>Breastfeeding Resources</b> rents and sells breast pumps.....	293-5215
<b>Other Lactation Consultants</b> .....	889-3615



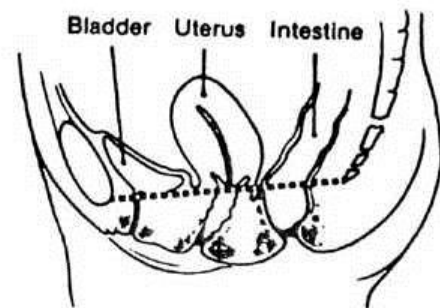
### Bottle feeding Mothers

Even though you have chosen to bottle feed your baby, your milk will still “come in.” This usually happens 2 – 4 days after the birth. Your breasts will become very full and large. Many women feel very uncomfortable when this happens - the good news is that it only lasts for 24 - 36 hours. During this time it is recommended to wear a supportive bra (sports bras are a great idea). When showering, do not let the warm water run over your breasts - this will stimulate milk production. Ice packs are helpful, try using bags of frozen vegetables (peas or corn) and place them over your breasts and under your armpits. Tylenol (325 - 650 mg every 4 - 6 hours) or Ibuprofen (400 - 600 mg every 4 - 6 hours) may also help with the pain. You may have some leakage of milk for about 2 weeks after the birth. It is possible, but uncommon, for breast infections to happen to bottle feeding mothers. If you notice a red, hot, painful area on your breasts, try applying warm wet compresses several times a day. If you have a fever more than 101° F, call your midwife.

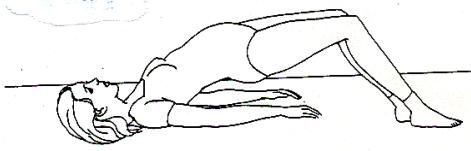
### Exercise

Take the first week or two to rest and recover from the birth of your baby. Then it is a good idea to increase your activity and start exercising. Taking a half-hour walk every day is a great way to begin. If your vaginal bleeding increases you need to slow down. Pelvic floor exercises are a great way to strengthen the vaginal/perineal muscles and improve circulation. These muscles can be weakened during birth. They help prevent wetting your underwear when sneezing or coughing. They also keep the uterus, bladder, and rectum from dropping into the vagina. You can find the perineal muscle by trying to stop and restart the flow of urination. If you can do this, you can strengthen that muscle. Try doing 10 “squeezes” each time you feed the baby. Hold the squeeze for 10 seconds every time.

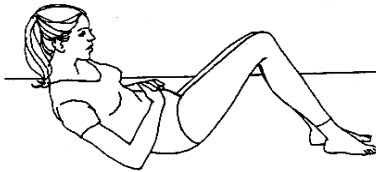
*Good pelvic floor support with a firm base, organs in place*



*These are some exercises to start the second week after delivery. Try each exercise 10 times in the morning and evening, adding more when you feel comfortable.*



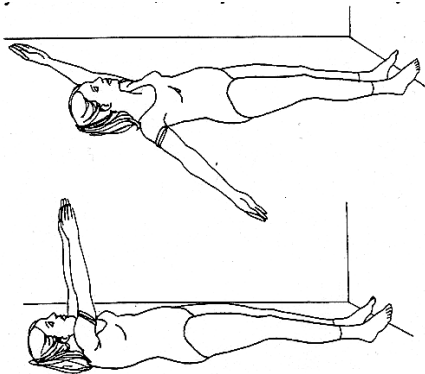
Lie flat with your arms at your sides. Slide your feet toward your buttocks. Arch your back while supporting yourself with arms, shoulders, and feet. Relax



Lie flat with your knees raised. Then lift your head. While raising the pelvis and tightening buttock muscles. Relax.



Lie flat. Breathe in deeply from your abdomen. Exhale all the air. Rest. Repeat five times.



Lie flat with your arms out at your sides. With your elbows stiff, raise your arms until they are straight over your head bring your palms together. Lower your arms. Rest. Repeat five times.



**APPLE study patients**

If you are in the APPLE study and need help making your 6 week postpartum appointment with your midwife, please call Anne at 272-6391.