



## K. Anthony Shanbour, M.D. Obstetrics & Gynecology

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### Frequently Asked Postpartum Questions

**Why is my bottom sore/ swollen?** Your bottom is sore/ swollen because you have stitches there. These will dissolve in about 2 week's time. You may also have hemorrhoids.

**Why is my bleeding so heavy?** It is normal to have heavier bleeding after delivery. It should become lighter as the weeks go on and change from bright red to dark red to red/pink to brown/pink to a creamy discharge. It is also normal to pass small blood clots after delivery. Any clot larger than an egg in size needs to be brought to the nurses' attention.

**Why are my hands and feet still swollen?** The fluid you acquired during your pregnancy in your feet and hands does not disappear overnight. It may take several days or weeks for this to happen. You may notice that you are urinating more frequently after delivery to get rid of this fluid.

**When will my breast milk be in?** Breast milk comes in normally 4-5 days after delivery. Your breasts may feel heavy; you may run a low grade temp (99-100) and just not feel good. Your breasts may swell and become firm; frequent short periods of breast feeding every 2 hours may alleviate the full feeling. Cold cabbage leaves applied to the breasts also help.

**When will this tape come off my incision(C- Section Delivery)?** C- Section deliveries will have an abdominal incision that will have tape on the incision. These steri-strips may be removed when they start pulling away from the skin. Normally this happens within 7-10 days of surgery. These strips need to be removed by the end of second week and may be removed while you are in shower.

**When may I take a bath in the tub?** C- Section deliveries may take a tub bath 10-14 days after delivery if you are able to get yourself in and out of the tub. Vaginal deliveries may take a tub bath as soon as you are able.

**When may I drive?** C- Section deliveries may drive a car 10-14 days after surgery. Vaginal deliveries may drive when you feel able. Do not drive while taking pain medication.

**When will I have my period?** Since you may bleed 4-6 weeks after your delivery, you may begin a period at the end of this time unless you are breast feeding. Breastfeeding may delay the start of periods.

**When may I have sex?** You may resume intercourse after you return for your appointment at the doctor's office (Postpartum Visit) and Dr. Shanbour has given the ok.

**When should I go back to the doctor?** You need to make your OB Postpartum appointment at your last OB visit during check out. It will be 4 weeks from your delivery date, unless stated otherwise by Dr. Shanbour.

**When do I need a pap smear?** You will schedule your next pap smear at your OB Postpartum appointment when you check out. It will be for 9 months from that day, unless otherwise stated by Dr. Shanbour.

**When can I start birth control methods?** Birth control methods generally are started at the doctor's discretion. Usually this is discussed at your postpartum visit. Intercourse should not be resumed until you see the doctor and are checked to make sure you are healed.

**When may I start exercising?** You may resume normal exercises after you see Dr. Shanbour at your postpartum visit. It takes approximately 4 weeks for your uterus to return to normal size. Walking is good exercise that you may start doing as soon as you feel like it. You may start abdominal exercises 6 weeks after c-section delivery.

**What do I take to make my bottom feel better?** Soaking your bottom in the bathtub several times a day for 2 weeks will help. Keeping your bottom clean by using the peri-bottle to cleanse after urinating or having a bowel movement will help. You may also shower. Soaking baths feel good even if you have no stitches.

**What can I take to help me have a Bowel Movement or for constipation?** Stool Softener or laxative is available to you while in the hospital. It is important to have a bowel movement within four days after delivery. Milk of magnesia [3 tablespoons at bed time] may be taken until you have a bowel movement. Also refer to the medication list handed out at your prenatal appointment under constipation for other medication options.

**What can I do to help gas pains after a c-section?** Walking will help relieve gas pains. Start by walking in the room and gradually advance so you can walk in the halls for five to ten minutes every 1-2 hours. Gradually increase the amount of time you walk. Continue this after you get home.

**What can I do to prevent my milk from coming in if I bottle feed?** If you plan to formula feed, wearing your bra immediately after delivery and continuously for the next several weeks will cut down on the amount of milk produced. Do not stimulate your breast by massaging or letting warm water run over them. Cold cabbage leaves applied to the breast will also help.

**What can help my sore nipples?** Sore nipples may be helped by latching the baby on properly. Babies need to be attached back onto the areola with the whole nipple into the baby's mouth. Nursing should not hurt after a few minutes' sucking (if the baby is attached properly). Air dry the nipples after nursing and apply expressed colostrum breast milk to sore red nipples. The first 2 weeks are the time for adjustment to nursing so give yourself this amount of time before thinking of stopping breast feeding.

**What do I do to take care of the circumcision?** Circumcisions are to be kept clean and dry. Plastibell circumcisions will have a plastic ring around the end of the foreskin that will fall off by itself in approximately 7-10 days. Gomco Circumcisions will need to have Vaseline applied around the end of the circumcision with each diaper change. The circumcision may be cleansed gently with soap and water, NEVER WITH ALCOHOL.

**How long will bleeding be heavy?** Your bleeding may last from 4-6 weeks after delivery.

**May I take anything for pain and will it hurt my baby if I breast feed?** Pain medication will be ordered for you by Dr. Shanbour after delivery. It is ok for you to take medications to be comfortable. A prescription will also be given to you at your discharge from the hospital. Take these even if you are nursing.

**Is it ok to get up and walk around?** You need to get up and move around after delivery to build up your strength. Walking in the room is acceptable. Notify Dr. Shanbour for any temperature over 101 degrees.

**Should I feed the baby every time he/she cries?** Normally babies are fed every 2-3 hours if breast feeding. Formula feed babies are fed every 3-4 hours normally. Check for other reasons that the baby may be crying if the baby has just been fed a short time before.

**Do I have to touch the baby's cord?** Care of the cord is very important and touching the cord will not hurt the baby. Proper cleansing WITH RUBBING ALCOHOL at least 3-4 times a day is necessary. Be sure to clean the area next to the tummy and all areas of the cord. The cord will fall off in about 14 days with proper cleansing. If cord remains on after 3 weeks, contact the baby's pediatrician for instructions.