

Postnatal Changes

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| Iodine | Iodine is very important for your baby's brain development. It is important to continue taking iodine while breastfeeding your baby. If you need a further script please let your midwife know |
| Your breasts | <p>The hormone changes that occur during pregnancy change your breast tissue, whether you breastfeed or not. An increase in breast size is common during pregnancy and you may have noticed your nipples getting darker and becoming more tender.</p> <p>Many women find their breasts change dramatically during the first few days after birth as they begin to produce milk. When your milk comes in on day three or four after birth, your breasts may become enlarged, firm and uncomfortable. To manage any discomfort;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• wear a well-fitted maternity bra for support.• If your milk is flowing, take warm showers.• Gently massage your breasts while in the shower to increase circulation, reduce any lumps and open the milk ducts.• Use warm or cold compresses – whichever provides relief. <p>If you are breastfeeding your baby, practice makes perfect. Your baby has great instincts for breastfeeding, but still needs to master the skill of attaching, suckling and emptying the breast. As your baby masters this skill, so will you. Breastfeeding can be a challenge. Don't misinterpret this as signs that your 'baby doesn't want it' or you 'aren't making enough milk'. Have patience and confidence in yourself and do not hesitate to ask advice from your midwife.</p> |
| Tears and stitches | <p>It's common to have pain, tenderness or swelling around the vagina after the birth. The pain can be a lot worse if you have stitches because of tearing during the birth. Good hygiene is important to the healing process, keep the area clean and pat dry. If you do have stitches, bathe the area often in clean, warm water to help it heal. Have a bath or shower with plain warm water. After bathing, dry yourself carefully. In the first few days remember to sit down gently; lying on your side can also be comfortable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using an ice pack (e.g., ice cubes wrapped in a wet wash cloth) for a few days after the birth can help.• Taking paracetamol will help.• Ural sachets may be helpful for a few days.• Arnica and witch hazel may be helpful if you are feeling bruised and swollen.• Pelvic floor exercises are important to keep the circulation flowing and aid healing. |

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| <p>Going to the toilet</p> | <p>The thought of passing urine can be a bit frightening at first because of the soreness and numbness. These grazes can cause a stinging sensation when you pass urine during the first few days following childbirth. Increasing the amount of water, you drink will dilute your urine and reduce the stinging sensation. Some women also find that it helps when they go to the toilet to squirt water gently onto themselves using a water bottle.</p> <p>You probably will not need to open your bowels for a few days after the birth, but it's important not to let yourself become constipated.</p> <p>Haemorrhoids are very common during pregnancy and after birth and usually disappear within a few days. To minimise constipation and haemorrhoids, increase your intake of foods high in fibre, such as fresh fruit, vegetables, bran and wholemeal bread, and drink plenty of water. This should make bowel movements easier and less painful</p> |
| <p>Afterpains / Tummy pains</p> | <p>After baby is born your uterus (womb) starts contracting back to its pre-pregnancy size. You may feel quite painful twinges or cramps in your tummy, or period-type pains – especially if this isn't your first baby. Breastfeeding also makes the womb contract, so you may get tummy pain while you are feeding.</p> <p>If you are experiencing afterpains the following may help</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paracetamol 1 gram (2 tablets) 6 hourly as needed • Hot water bottle/ heat pack on your tummy • Pineapple has been suggested as helpful • Arnica • Homeopathic treatments from the Lincoln Mall pharmacy |
| <p>Bleeding</p> | <p>It's normal to bleed from your vagina after birth and, like a period, the bleeding will be quite heavy at first. Gradually the bleeding will become a brownish colour and can last for about 6 weeks, getting less and less until it stops.</p> <p>It is important to change your pad regularly, keep up good hygiene practices and avoid using tampons in the first 4-6 weeks. Period friendly underwear can be a more comfortable alternative to purchase and wear.</p> <p>If you are losing blood in large clots, or if bleeding becomes very heavy or bright red colour, or is smelly, talk to your midwife</p> |
| <p>Swollen legs</p> | <p>Your legs and feet are likely to swell after the birth. Some women also have swollen hands. The swelling will gradually go away over about a week as your body gets rid of the fluid you stored during pregnancy. Again nettle tea can be helpful, as is increasing your fluid intake to help your body flush the extra fluid out as urine. If the swelling doesn't go away after a week, or you have headaches or pain in your legs, talk to your midwife.</p> |