



# What to Expect While Recovering from a C-Section

After having a baby delivered by Caesarean Section, it's normal to experience pain, soreness and vaginal bleeding. A C-Section is a major abdominal surgery and your body will need time to recover.

## INCISION CARE

- Your incision may be closed with staples or stitches. Stitches will dissolve on their own, and staples will need to be removed within the first week after your delivery. Generally we do this at one of your first baby visits in our clinic.
- Rest as much as possible, and avoid lifting anything heavier than your baby while your incision heals. This may mean accepting help from family and friends to do things like carrying the infant car seat, picking up/putting away groceries, household chores and carrying laundry
- Wear loose clothing to avoid putting pressure on or rubbing against your incision.
- Hold a pillow against your incision for support when you cough or sneeze.
- Take pain medication as prescribed to keep you comfortable. Pain should decrease after 2 or 3 days, but tenderness and sharp or burning sensations along the incision are normal, and can occur for up to 6 weeks.
- Keep the incision clean and dry. Gently pat the area dry after showers, and avoid submerging your incision in baths/hot tubs/swimming pools for the first 6 weeks.

## WHAT TO EXPECT DURING RECOVERY

- You may have bleeding from your vagina for up to 6 weeks after your delivery. It should gradually change from red to pink and then become yellow/white.
- Pain medication, surgery, and decreased physical activity can cause constipation. Drinking lots of water, choosing foods high in fiber, chewing gum and short walks can help keep your bowels moving. Stool softeners and laxatives may be necessary and can be prescribed for you or be bought over-the-counter.
- You may find you tire easily. Listen to your body and rest as needed.
- Avoid vigorous exercise or anything that causes you to strain your muscles (ie. Sit ups).

## WHEN TO CALL A DOCTOR

- If your incision becomes red and/or hot to touch, appears to be opening up, is oozing or bleeding, has a foul smell, or you develop a fever
- If your vaginal bleeding has suddenly increased or become bright red after decreasing to pink/white
- You are passing large clots or soaking a hygiene pad in less than an hour

## YOUR SIX WEEK CHECKUP

- All women have a checkup with us six weeks after their baby is born. At this appointment we will review your delivery and answer any questions you may have. We will also discuss things like returning to regular exercise and sexual activity, check to ensure your incision has healed well, and talk to you about your options for birth control and family planning.
- Occasionally the Obstetrician who performed your c-section will ask you to book your 6 week check with them so they can assess your incision. If this is the case, booking one with us as well is not necessary. It is your choice who you decide to see for your 6 week check.