

# Virtual Community Prenatal Series

*Support for a healthy pregnancy, birth and beyond*



## Postpartum Changes and Self-Care

September 21, 2020

# AGENDA

- Postpartum Recovery
- Postpartum Physical Changes
- Sexuality and Birth Control
- Postpartum Emotional Changes
- Self-Care

# POSTPARTUM RECOVERY - GENERAL

<b>R</b>	<b>RELAX</b> whenever you can
<b>E</b>	<b>EAT</b> well and drink plenty of fluids
<b>S</b>	<b>SHARE</b> the responsibility (Ask for help)
<b>T</b>	<b>TAKE TIME</b> to enjoy the baby

## POSTPARTUM PHYSICAL CHANGES

### QUESTION

*What are some physical discomforts you might expect to experience after giving birth?*

# POSTPARTUM PHYSICAL CHANGES

## Common Discomforts After Giving Birth

- Cramping
- Vaginal Discharge
- Vaginal Pain
- Tender Breasts
- Problems Urinating
- Bowel Movements

# POSTPARTUM PHYSICAL CHANGES

## Cramping (changes in the uterus)

- Uterus slowly returns to its almost pre-pregnancy size
- Cramping (after-pains), sometimes worse while breastfeeding

### What can you do to help?

- Warm bath
- Heating pad on belly
- Deep breathing and relaxation
- Pain medicine (Tylenol, Advil)

# POSTPARTUM PHYSICAL CHANGES

## Vaginal Discharge

- Lochia (blood and tissue from lining of Uterus)
- First 24 hours: like heavy period (bright red, small clots)
- Within a few days flow will decrease and become darker
- Gradually changes to yellowish/whitish discharge (**up to 10 days to 5 weeks**)

**Use sanitary pads during this time, AVOID tampons!**

When to worry about Vaginal Discharge:

- Excessive bleeding (heavier than a normal period, **soaking maxi pad front to back and side to side in less than an hour**)
- Foul Smell

# POSTPARTUM PHYSICAL CHANGES

## Vaginal Pain

- Perineal soreness (up to 6 weeks)
- Increased discomfort with stitches (dissolve within 2-4 weeks)

What can you do to help?

- Place a frozen, wet maxipad in underwear
- Warm Bath
- Keep area clean



# POSTPARTUM PHYSICAL CHANGES

## Breast Tenderness

- Sore Nipples
- Full, sore breasts
- Feed often to prevent engorgement

### What can you do to help?

- Apply cold compress between feedings
- Apply warm compress prior to feeding
- Wear supportive bra

# POSTPARTUM PHYSICAL CHANGES

## Bowel Movements

- May not occur for 2-3 days after birth
- Pain on passing stool especially if you have had extensive tears requiring stitches.
- Try to avoid constipation (drink plenty of fluids, eat foods high in fibre)

**If constipated for more than 3 days in a row, talk to your health care provider!**

# POSTPARTUM PHYSICAL CHANGES

## Problems Urinating

- Trouble passing urine during first few days after birth
- Urinating may sting a little
- Remember to go and void regularly

### What can you do to help?

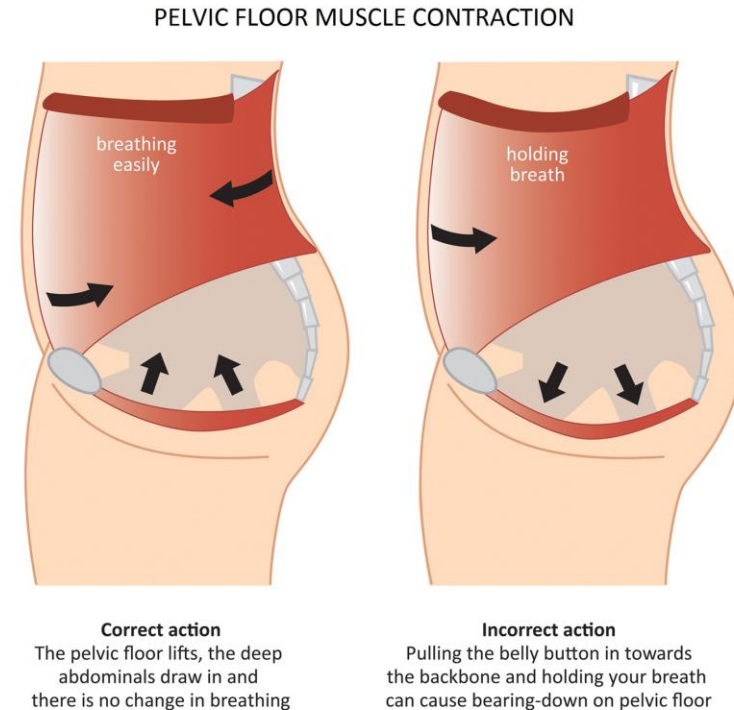
- Turn on taps in bathroom
- Squeeze bottle with warm water (urinate while showering)
- Drink Plenty of fluids!
- Kegels exercises

# “KEGELS” OR “PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISES”

1. **Relax, in a sitting or standing position**
  - a. Keep your legs hips width apart
  - b. Focus on steady breathing throughout this sequence of exercises
2. **To find your pelvic muscle, imagine you are trying hold back urine or passing wind**
  - a. You should feel a lift within your pelvis.
  - b. You might also feel a gentle tightening of the muscles low down in your abdomen.
3. **For strength, hold this position for 10 seconds, then relax for 10 seconds and repeat**

**(ELEVATOR)**

**\*\*Try to Keep Stomach and Buttocks Relaxed\*\***



# POSTPARTUM PHYSICAL CHANGES

## **Other Reasons to Seek Medical Help:**

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Excessive fatigue

## POSTPARTUM RECOVERY- C-SECTION

- C-section birth requires a longer stay at the hospital (2-3 days)
- Rest well, you are recovering from a major abdominal surgery
- Walk every day, slowly increasing each day
- Avoid strenuous activities (e.g. cycling, jogging, aerobic exercise) for first 6 weeks
- Avoid heavy lifting (anything more than your baby) for first 6 weeks
- Hold pillows on your belly to support your incision and reduce pain when coughing or laughing etc.
- Wound care

# POSTPARTUM SEXUALITY AND BIRTH CONTROL

## Postpartum Menstrual Periods

- All women will experience delay in the return of their period (**Lactational Amenorrhoea**)
- Pregnancy can happen anytime sexual activity resumes
- It is matter of personal comfort and preference, when a couple may resume sexual activity (generally 4-6 weeks is recommended)
- Begin using birth control as soon as your plan to be sexually active after birth

# POSTPARTUM SEXUALITY AND BIRTH CONTROL

## Questions to consider when choosing birth control

- Are you breastfeeding? – **Lactational amenorrhea method (LAM)**

To avoid an unplanned pregnancy, you will need to use another form of birth control when:

- Your period returns, or
- Your baby is older than 6 months, or
- Your baby is no longer exclusively breastfeeding

**Talk to your healthcare provider to find the option that's best for you!**

What is a good pregnancy spacing period?

- WHO recommends 18 to 24 months



## POSTPARTUM EMOTIONAL CHANGES

### QUESTION

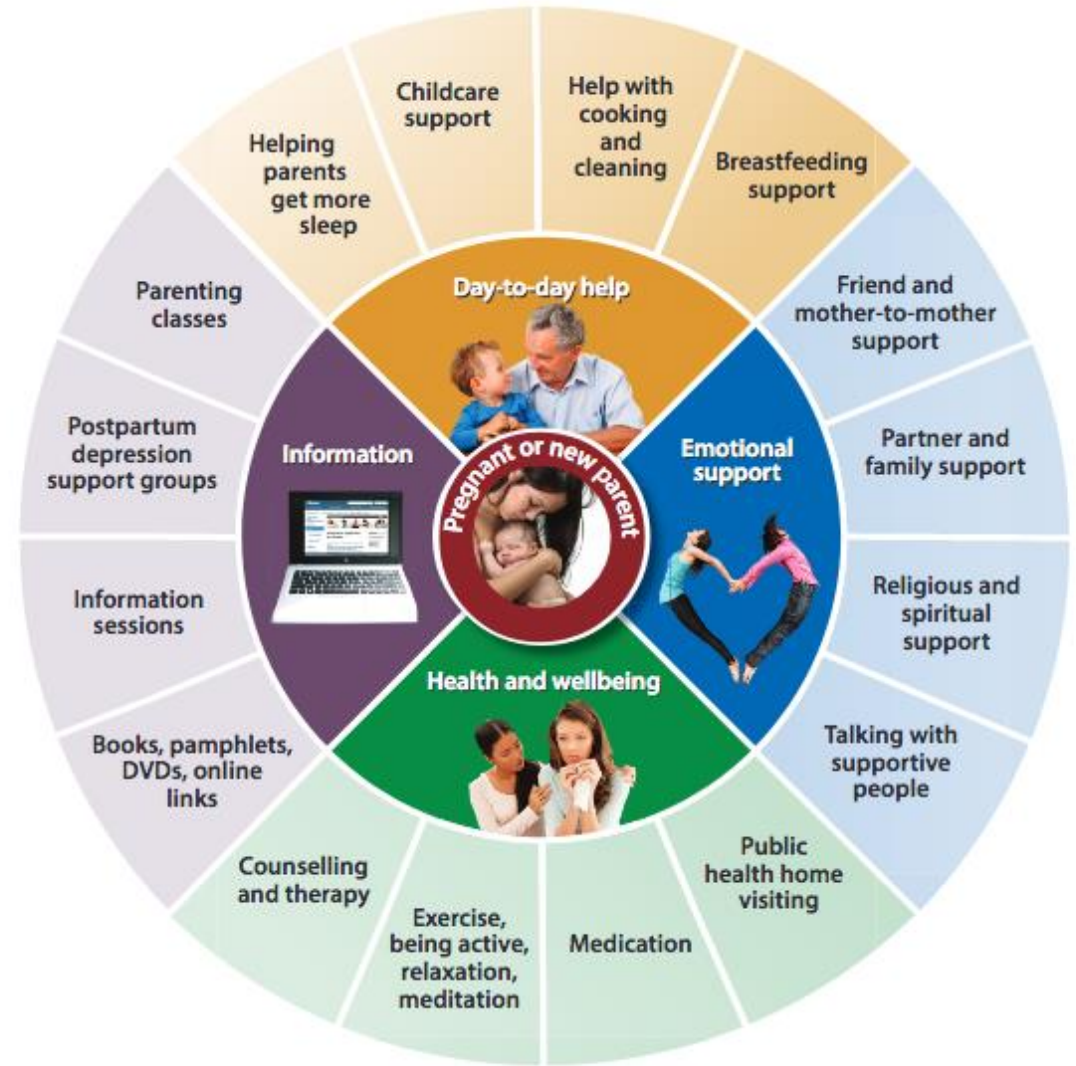
*What are some emotional changes you might expect to experience after giving birth?*

# POSTPARTUM EMOTIONAL CHANGES:VIDEO



# SELF-CARE (CIRCLE OF SUPPORT)

- Instrumental (*Day-to-Day*)
- Informational
- Emotional
- Therapeutic (*Health & Wellbeing*)



COMMENTS/QUESTIONS?

# REFERENCES

Association of Ontario Midwives.

Better Outcomes Registry & Network (BORN) Ontario.

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada. 2014. Healthy Beginnings: Giving your baby the best start from preconception to birth, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition.

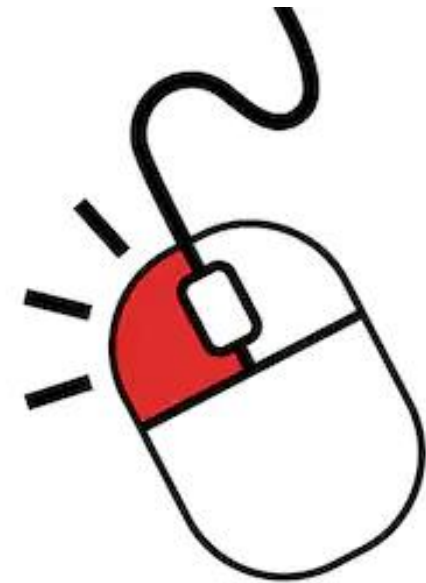
# EVALUATION

Thank you for attending the session today!

Your Feedback is Important to us,  
**Please click on the link in the chat box  
to complete a short evaluation.**

## RESOURCES

**Please click on the link in the chat  
box  
to access additional resources  
and the presentation slides**



## UPCOMING SESSIONS

Wednesday September 23 (6-8pm) – Newborn Care, Q&A