

Normal Postpartum Changes

Vaginal Bleeding - Immediately following delivery of your baby, it is normal to have vaginal bleeding that is similar to a heavy menstrual period. Over the next few days bleeding will decrease and become more watery and pale in color. Eventually your discharge will change to a brown, then yellow color. This lighter bleeding can last for as long as six to eight weeks after delivery. In the following weeks after delivery you may experience times where vaginal bleeding increases for short periods of time, especially after breastfeeding or sitting for long periods of time. Many new mothers who do not breastfeed will have their first menstrual cycle before their baby reaches 12 weeks of age. Breastfeeding mothers may not have a menstrual cycle until they discontinue nursing, may have irregular vaginal bleeding, or have regular periods. It is important to know that breastfeeding should not be used as a form of birth control. Your first menstrual cycle after delivery might be heavier than is normal for you. This may last for the first few menstrual cycles. You should refrain from intercourse for at least 6 weeks after delivery. If you are planning to use an IUD for contraception, you should refrain from intercourse for eight weeks, or until your IUD is inserted.

Please contact the office with any of the following symptoms

- Vaginal bleeding heavy enough to saturate a super absorbency pad in an hour or less
- You pass large clots that are bright red in color along with continued vaginal bleeding
- You feel lightheaded or dizzy
- Green vaginal discharge with a foul odor

Breast Changes – The first few days after delivery your breasts will make a yellow substance called colostrum. This substance is sometimes called “first milk,” and is exactly what your baby needs for the first few days of life. Colostrum is packed with proteins, minerals, vitamins, and antibodies. You may not feel like you are producing enough milk the first few days after delivery, but the small amount of colostrum you produce is the perfect amount for your baby’s tiny stomach. Around three to five days after delivery, colostrum will gradually change into mature breast milk. This is often referred to as your “milk coming in.” During this time your breast may become heavy and engorged. Engorgement can be quite uncomfortable for some women, but usually subsides within one to two days. Most women will experience engorgement whether or not they decide to breastfeed. Please don’t hesitate to ask for help with breastfeeding from your postpartum nurse while still at Monument Health-Rapid City Hospital.

Please contact our office with any of the following breast symptoms

- Reddened area or streaks
- Areas that are very sore
- Fever greater than 100.3
- Chills
- Flu like aches