The Cesarean Section Delivery Patient who has experienced Infant Loss

This information is to help answer some questions you may have about the healing process and to give you instructions to follow for the next six weeks. If you have any other questions, please ask your OB Care Provider or nurse.

Grief Information:
It is normal for women, especially ones who have experienced an infant loss, to pass through a grieving period that may start days or weeks after giving birth. Symptoms include loss of appetite, mood swings, difficulty sleeping, irritability and anxiety. You may also have feelings of sadness and cry at unexpected times. If you are experiencing grief, remember that this is normal. Feel free to talk it over with your OB Care Provider or nurse if you continue to feel “blue” or to ask advice on any questions that may be troubling you.

How to help yourself: eat well, exercise, take care of yourself. Consider going to a support group to help you deal with your feelings regarding your loss. Call 706-721-8299 for more information.

Bathing and Hygiene:
1. Keep abdominal incision clean and dry. You may shower daily using soap but pat area dry. If you have steri-strips on the incision, remove them in two weeks if they have not fallen off on their own.
2. After your steri-strips come off, you may take a tub bath.
3. Discharge from your vagina (birth canal) may last a few days to six weeks or more. The color will vary from bright red to light pink to white. This is normal.
4. Use only sanitary pads, no tampons for six weeks.
5. Do not douche or use vaginal suppositories for six weeks.

Diet:
1. If you are on a special diet, follow it as prescribed by the doctor or dietician.
2. If you are not on a special diet, continue to eat a balanced diet as discussed with you during your pregnancy. Increasing the amount of fiber (fruits, vegetables and whole grain foods) in your diet will help keep your bowel movements soft. A fiber supplement such as Metamucil, Citrucel or Benefiber can also be added.
3. Drink plenty of fluids, six to eight glasses of water a day.

Medications
1. To promote tissue healing, continue to take your prenatal or multi vitamins and iron tablets for six weeks.
2. If you have constipation, a mild laxative, such as Milk of Magnesia, or a glass of prune juice may be taken at night if increasing your fluid and fiber intake doesn’t help.
3. If you are prescribed Ibuprofen or Motrin for postpartum pain/cramping, please take with food to lessen gastric discomfort.
**Breast Care:**
Wear a supportive bra night and day for at least one week. Apply cold ice packs to your breasts or place cold cabbage leaves around your breast until the tightness and soreness go away. Also avoid stimulation to your breasts or nipples such as the shower water hitting directly on your breasts or using a breast pump. Both of these will stimulate milk production.

**Activity:**
1. You may sit up and walk about as you desire.
2. During your first two weeks at home, limit your activities to caring for yourself.
3. Take rest periods in bed during the day for two weeks.
4. No heavy lifting, stooping, bending, sweeping, mopping, strenuous exercise and heavy housework for four to six weeks. Objects that cannot be lifted with one hand are considered too heavy.
5. Limit climbing stairs for two weeks, and then gradually return to normal.
6. You may drive a car in three - four weeks if all soreness is gone. Do not drive while taking pain medicine other than Ibuprofen or Motrin. It may make you drowsy.
7. You may wear support hose until you are fully active.

**Sex:**
1. You may resume sexual relations when you and your partner are comfortable and as directed by your physician. Lubricant may be needed for comfort.
2. It is possible to get pregnant soon after your delivery. Use the birth control method that you decided on in the hospital before you begin sexual relations. If you are planning on taking the birth control pill or using the patch you should start taking them/applying it on the date you were instructed before leaving the hospital.
3. If you chose to receive a Medroxyprogesterone (Depo-Provera) injection as your birth control method, you will need to receive this injection every 3 months. Your second injection will be due by ________________.

**Exercises:**
1. Talk with your OB Care Provider before starting exercises.
2. Pelvic and perineal muscles may be strengthened by tightening and releasing the muscles around your vagina, urinary opening, and rectum. These are called “Kegel’s” exercises. These are the muscles you use when you stop and start your urine stream. You should build up to doing at least 50 Kegels per day. You may start these at any time.

**Call your doctor if you have:**
- Redness, warmth or a knot in your lower legs.
- Severe pain in your stomach.
- Heavy bleeding (more than 1-2 pads soaked in one hour) from your birth canal.
- Foul (bad) smelling discharge from your incision or your vagina (birth canal).
- A fever over 100.4 F orally.
- A lingering depressed mood or you don’t feel like getting out of bed.
- If you feel like harming yourself or others, you should come to the Emergency Room
- Painful urination.
- Red or swollen area in your breast, especially if you have a fever.

**Call 911 if you experience sudden shortness of breath or chest pain.**
Follow-up:
If you did not receive an appointment to see your OB care provider before leaving the hospital, our call center will call you with your appointment. It is important that you keep this appointment. If there are any questions or problems, call the Women’s Health Clinic at 706-721-4959. After hours and on weekends, phone calls are transferred to an Answering Service and a Physician will return your call.