

- Turn head to right, then back then centre and then left side
- Put hands on shoulders and make a large circle with elbow by moving forward up and back.
- Put arms by your side and pull shoulder blades together.
- Hold for ten counts.
- Put arms by your side and pull shoulder blades together.
- Hold for ten counts.



The timings for above mentioned exercises should be increased gradually from 5-15 minutes and should be performed at least three times per day before meals.

When Should We Plan To Have Our Next Baby?

In your first follow-up visit after two weeks of discharge, your doctor will tell you about contraceptive options so that you and your husband can decide before you come for your final postnatal check-up six weeks later. It is very important for you to have this final check-up. Please keep your appointment.

For more details, please contact:

Ob/Gyn B2 ward

Aga Khan University Hospital
Karachi.

Phone : 34930051, Ext: 2290-91

Ob/Gyn A2 ward

Aga Khan University Hospital
Karachi.

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Self Care After Childbirth

A Guide for Patients/Families



This brochure provides information About Self Care after Childbirth. It is designed to respond to the questions most frequently asked by Patients and their families.



آغا خان یونیورسٹی ہسپتال، کراچی

The Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi.



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Self Care After Childbirth

At last! Your baby is delivered. These wonderful moments must have brought a flood of happiness and a lot of excited expectations. The months ahead, as you get to know each other, will almost certainly be among the most exciting moments of your life with a new routine and an amazing responsibility of caring for a new, precious life.

Some mothers may also feel a little frightened and have many questions. The more you know about what to expect as a mother, the more confident you will feel, and the more you can enjoy this extremely important milestone of your life. Following are frequently asked questions by mothers:

How Much Can I Do?

- For the first month it is normal to feel weak and tire easily. Your strength will gradually return. Within six weeks you should be back to normal and able to return to work. Start household chores, including cooking, washing dishes and light cleaning straight away.
- Do not lift anything heavier than 5 kilograms for the first 6 weeks.(if you have had a C-Section)
- Do not do anything that makes you strain/grunt such as lifting a heavy chair.
- When using the stairs, hold the railing and move slowly and carefully. If you're tired, stop and rest midway.
- After you have been home a few days, walk outside whenever you feel like. These walks give you exercise, fresh air, an appetite and a change of scenery, all of which you will need.
- Take care of your own and the baby's personal needs. Bathe or shower as usual. Do not lock the bathroom in case you feel weak and need help.
- Rest for 4-6 hours during the day time for the first 2 weeks.
- Sometimes you may become depressed/upset/irritable due to household chores and additional workload, that is normal.

C) Crossover Curl Ups

- Lie on back.
- Knees bent, feet on floor.
- Arms stretched towards your knees.
- Lift right side of head and shoulders up to your left knee. Hold for five counts.
- Slowly return to starting position.
- Repeat five times to each knee, alternating sides.



4) Thigh And Buttock Exercises

- Lie on back with knees bent and arm at side.
- Lift hips off floor, do not arch back.
- Hold for ten counts.
- Slowly lower down your back.
- Relax.



5) Neck And Shoulder Exercises

- These exercises can be done while sitting, standing or lying
- Bring chin to chest, bending head forward, back to starting position.
- Relax



How To Do This Exercise?

- Lie on back with knees bent
- Tighten abdominal muscles and press your back into the floor
- Hold for ten counts. Relax slowly and continue to breathe naturally.



3) Abdominal Muscles Exercises

- To improve and strengthen the abdominal muscles.
- Prevent and/or relieve back pain.
- Improve posture.

A) Curl-ups

- Lie on back with knees bent.
- Bring arms across the abdomen.
- Tuck in your chin and lift head and shoulders as you breathe out by lifting your shoulder and bring head towards abdomen.
- Lift head and shoulders up as you breathe out.
- Hold for ten counts, slowly lower head and shoulder, and relax.



B) Curl - Backs

- Sit with knees bent, feet on floor, hands on abdomen.
- Breathe out and curl back about half way.
- Hold for ten counts.
- Return to sitting position.



When do I Breast Feed?

- Allow the baby to feed whenever he or she demands.
- Do not worry that you may not have enough milk
- Put the baby to the breast and the rest will follow naturally.
- During the first few days, the baby will want to be fed every two hours.

The interval increases as baby settles down to his/her required needs. (For more details please refer to our Patient and Family Education brochure on "Breast Feeding".

How long will I Have Postpartum Bleeding?

- A blood stained discharge for 3-4 weeks after childbirth is normal which may be off and on. It will become less each day and will change the colour from red to yellow and then to white.
- If discharge is heavy, i.e. 2-3 pads are soaked every 2-3 hours or clots are passed, report to emergency room immediately.

How Do I Look After my Stitches (Episiotomy/Abdominal Stitches)?

- The episiotomy stitches dissolve in two weeks time where as abdominal stitches have to be removed at a specific time as advised by your doctor.
- The pain is usually throbbing and sharp for the first week. Take painkillers regularly as prescribed by your doctor.
- Walking and sitting may make you uncomfortable.
- Clean with soap and tap water and dry carefully every time you go to the bathroom or every 2-3 times a day.
- Change your sanitary pads frequently,
- If you have severe pain and redness, or a foul smelly discharge, come immediately to the Emergency Department.

How Much Should I Eat And Drink After Delivery?

- You need a nourishing diet to build up your strength so that you don't get tired.
- While you are breastfeeding you will often feel hungry and thirsty.
- Eat nutritious foods like meat, vegetables and fruits.
- Foods rich in iron are green leafy vegetables and liver. Drink at least 8-10 glasses of water and 2-3 glasses of milk each day.
- You should take care of your weight by balance diet and exercises, but you should not be on dieting.

Medications:

If your doctor has prescribed any take-home medications, follow the directions carefully.

What Exercise Can I Do?

- Start exercises when recommended by your doctor.
- All movements should be made gently, smoothly and rhythmically.
- Start with "deep breathing" the day after delivery, then "strengthening of the abdominal muscles" and then "pelvic floor exercises".
- Use the chart provided for recommended exercises.

Exercise is the safest and healthiest way to return to your "pre-pregnant state". It increases circulation, relieves tension, strengthens and tone muscles. The areas of the body that need special attention are the pelvic floor and abdominal muscles. The following are a few tips for you.

- Do exercises daily - 5 times a day and progress to 10 times a day, unless otherwise stated;
- Exercises should be pain-free;
- Practice on firm surface;
- When picking up baby or changing bed, make sure that the side rail is down;

- Baby should be carried above the waist. Do not carry baby or toddler on your hips;
- Do not exercise when you are tired and also avoid long and tiring exercises;
- Take rest every day;
- Place a thin cushion behind your waist and pillow on your lap so that while breast feeding baby is at the right height (or you rather than stooping on baby);
- Back should be well supported and have a low stool for your feet.

1) Pelvic Floor Exercises

- Pelvic floor exercises help improve and strengthen the muscles of the pelvic floor.
- These exercises also increase circulation, therefore aid healing of the episiotomy.

These exercises can be done lying, sitting, standing or bathing.



How To Do Pelvic Floor Exercise?

- Squeeze muscles around your anal, vaginal and bladder openings;
- Draw up inside as if preventing your self from passing urine or stool;
- Hold for ten counts and relax;
- Do this exercise for five times per cycle.

2) Pelvic Tilt Exercises

- This exercise relieves backache and improves posture