



食康乐坐月子外送食补

SHL CONFINEMENT CARES SDN. BHD. (684224-p)

36-1, Jalan Prima, Vista Magna, Metro Prima, Kepong, 52100 Kuala Lumpur.

Tel: 03 – 6251 6133 Fax: 03 – 6251 7133

## Postpartum Q & A

### **I've been bleeding (lochia) ever since I gave birth a few days ago. Is this normal?**

Every woman bleeds after having a baby. Postpartum discharge, known as lochia, is the way your body discharges leftover blood, mucus, and placental tissue from the uterus. The discharge originates at the site where the placenta was attached to the uterine wall and it may come out in gushes or flow more evenly, like a menstrual period. After the initial bleeding slows and as the healing continues, the flow of lochia will turn from bright red to pink, and eventually to yellow-white.

### **How long will it last?**

You may bleed for as little as two to three weeks or as long as six weeks after birth. The flow will taper off very gradually. Red lochia should not persist for more than two weeks, although if you try to do too much too soon, it may start flowing again. If you see bright red blood, it's a sign to slow down.

### **Do I need to do anything about it?**

No. If you gave birth in a hospital or birth center, you were probably sent home with some heavy-duty sanitary pads that look like the ones your mom may have used a generation ago. Stock up on more pads when you get home; tampons are off limits for the first six weeks because they can introduce bacteria into your still-healing uterus and cause infection.

### **When should I call the doctor?**

Call your care provider if the bleeding:

- soaks more than a pad an hour
- remains heavy and bright red after the first week
- returns to bright red after the fourth postpartum day and does not abate with bedrest
- has large blood clots bigger than a quarter
- has a foul odor and you come down with a fever and / or chills

In rare cases, some women will have what is known as delayed postpartum hemorrhage. If you do have abnormally heavy bleeding (saturating a sanitary pad within an hour), call your doctor or midwife immediately. This could be a sign that a piece of the placenta was left inside the uterus or that the uterus isn't shrinking properly. If you're bleeding briskly and feeling faint, head to an emergency room.

### **I had my baby three months ago, and now my hair is starting to fall out. Is this normal?**

Many new moms are surprised to find themselves shedding more hair than usual sometime in the first few months after giving birth, but it's perfectly normal. And there's no need to panic. You won't go bald. In fact, your hair should be back to normal by your baby's first birthday.

Here's what's going on. Normally, about 85 to 95 percent of the hair on your head is growing and the other 5 to 15 percent is in a resting stage. After the resting period, this hair falls out (often while you're brushing or shampooing your hair) and is replaced by new growth. The average woman sheds about 100 hairs a day.

During pregnancy, increased levels of estrogen prolong the growing stage so there are fewer hairs in the resting stage and fewer falling out each day, so you have thicker, more luxuriant tresses. But after you give birth, your estrogen levels take a tumble and a lot more hair follicles enter the resting stage — and that means more hair coming out in the shower or on the brush. This unusual shedding will taper off and your hair will be back to its pre-pregnancy thickness about six to 12 months after you give birth.

### **I gave birth several days ago and my back is killing me. What's going on?**

There are several reasons your back hurts after giving birth. During pregnancy, your expanding uterus weakened your abdominal muscles and altered your posture, putting a strain on your back. Your back will continue to ache until your stomach muscles regain their strength and tone.

### **How long will it last?**

It's normal to have some back pain for the first few months after giving birth. How long the pain persists depends on such factors as whether you have a history of back problems, whether you are overweight, and how soon you start to exercise and work on your posture after giving birth. Always bend from your knees and lift objects and children from a crouching position to minimize the stress on your back. Let someone else lift heavy objects; this is not the time to risk throwing your back out.

Sit up straight when breastfeeding. Choose a comfortable chair with arm rests, and use pillows — lots of them — to lend extra support to your back and arms. (Most couches aren't supportive enough to sit on while breastfeeding.) Stick a few pillows under your feet, too, to avoid bending toward your baby. A footstool, coffee table, or stack of books works just as well. A pillow or folded receiving blanket on your lap can also keep you from hunching over. Whichever nursing position you use, be sure to bring your baby to your breast, rather than the other way around.

### **Engorged breasts. What is it?**

Within two to three days after you give birth, you may find that your breasts feel swollen, tender, throbbing, lumpy, and uncomfortably full. Sometimes the swelling extends all the way to your armpit. You may run a low-grade fever, too. Don't worry — as terrible as it sounds, this is truly a temporary, albeit painful, situation.

### **What causes it?**

Within 72 hours after you give birth, an abundance of breast milk "comes in" or becomes available to your baby. As that happens, more blood flows to your breasts and some of the surrounding tissue swells. Not every postpartum mom experiences true engorgement. Some women's breasts become only slightly full, but others find their breasts have grown astonishingly big and hard. Some women hardly notice the pain, as they are so involved in all the aspects of the first few postpartum days — from exhaustion to awe at having a newborn.

## How can I treat it?

First, keep in mind that engorgement is a positive sign: You're producing milk to feed your baby, and soon, with his help, you'll produce the right amount. Until then:

- Wear a supportive nursing bra, even during the night. Be sure it isn't too tight.
- Nurse frequently — every two to three hours — even if it means waking your baby. (This is especially important because unrelieved engorgement can cause a permanent drop in your milk production.) Try to get the first side as soft as possible. If your baby is satisfied with just one breast, you can offer the other breast at the next feeding.
- Avoid having your baby latch on and suckle when the areola — the dark area around your nipple — is very firm. To reduce the possibility of nipple damage and to help your baby latch on, manually express or pump milk until your areola softens. It may be easier to manually express milk in the shower; the warm water by itself may cause enough leakage to soften the areola.
- Avoid pumping milk except when you need to soften the areola or when your baby is unable to latch on. Excessive or habitual pumping can lead to overproduction of milk and prolonged engorgement.
- While your baby's nursing, gently massage the breast he's on. This encourages milk to flow and will help relieve some of the tightness and discomfort.
- To soothe the pain and help relieve swelling, apply cold packs to your breasts for a short period after nursing. Crushed ice in a plastic bag works well.
- Some women find relief by applying fresh green cabbage leaves to their breasts. Strip the main vein from two larger, outer leaves and cut a hole in each one for your nipple. Rinse and dry them before laying them on your breasts or sliding them into the cups of your bra.
- If you're really in pain, take ibuprofen, acetaminophen, or a mild pain reliever prescribed by your healthcare provider.
- Don't apply direct heat, such as warm washcloths, heating pads, or hot water bottles, to your engorged breasts unless it's to soften the areola and help your milk let-down. Rather than alleviate the pain, this may aggravate the condition.
- Look ahead: You'll get past this engorgement and soon be able to enjoy your breastfeeding relationship with your baby.

## How long does it last?

Fortunately, engorgement passes pretty quickly. You can expect it to diminish within 24 to 48 hours, and nursing your baby will only help the problem. If you're not nursing, it probably will get worse before it gets better. Once the engorgement passes, your breasts will be softer, although still full of milk.

## Can I still nurse?

You can and should nurse. Unrelieved engorgement can cause a permanent drop in your milk production, so it's important to nurse frequently right off the bat. If possible, breastfeed your baby immediately after he's born, and nurse often from that point on. Watch your baby for signs of hunger, such as sucking his fist and becoming restless. If he's crying, he's already worked up an appetite.

**Before becoming pregnant I weighed 57kg. I now weigh 75kg. I'm desperate to get back to my normal size after being pregnant but I'm nursing and concerned that if I lose weight, my breast milk will be affected. Is it possible to do both?**

You can breastfeed and lose weight at the same time if you do it slowly. Don't expect any miracle cures; plan on it taking at least 10 months to a year to get back to your pre-pregnancy weight. Losing weight gradually through healthy, low-fat eating and moderate exercise is important. Losing weight too quickly releases toxins (PCBs and pesticides) that are stored in your body fat into the bloodstream, which, in turn, increases the amount in the milk supply.

Don't think that you must wean your baby in order to lose weight. In fact, breastfeeding makes it easier to lose the excess weight because your body uses the stored energy in fat to make milk.

**When can I take a bath or a hot tub again after delivery?**

Most care providers agree that tub baths are safe immediately following delivery. Taking a tub bath after delivery can be therapeutic. The warm water can soothe the episiotomy repair and ease swollen hemorrhoids. It can also help to ease the tension and fatigue that go along with having a new baby at home. If you have had a cesarean section, you may be asked to wait a week or so until your abdominal incision is well on the way to healing. Talk to your care provider for exact instructions. As for the hot tub, I'd be more cautious. Because the water isn't drained after every use, the only way it would be safe before six weeks is if the tub is meticulously clean. You don't want to risk an infection during these critical early weeks while you are still healing. And you don't want to risk harming anyone else, either. If you're still bleeding, you could contaminate the tub, making it unsafe for others.

**Will breastfeeding really help make my uterus shrink to its pre-pregnancy size?**

Yes. When you breastfeed, the pituitary gland secretes the hormone oxytocin, which primarily acts to contract smooth muscle such as the sacs of milk in your breast. Contraction of the milk sacs causes your milk to move to the front of the breast, making it available for your baby. You'll probably feel this as the "letdown" reflex. With each feeding, oxytocin also causes the smooth muscle cells in the uterus to contract, enabling the uterus to shrink to its pre-pregnancy size. Oxytocin has one other important effect: inducing loving feelings in moms toward their babies. That's why it's sometimes called the love hormone.

**Will breastfeeding help me lose weight?**

Your body automatically layers on extra fatty tissue prenatally so you'll have enough fat stores to initiate and support lactation. However, if your diet is varied and well balanced, breastfeeding can help you lose your pregnancy weight without compromising either your or your baby's health by dieting. And you naturally burn calories to make breast milk each time you nurse. A mom who breastfeeds burns around 800 more calories than one who doesn't. So some new moms find the weight just seems to fall off while they're breastfeeding.

Postpartum women who diet, exercise vigorously, or skip meals may quickly drop pounds, but they also may release higher levels of toxins into their breast milk. Still, breast milk remains the healthiest food for your baby so don't let this deter you from breastfeeding. Work toward a slow, gradual weight loss, eat when you're hungry, and make sure to get enough fluids. It's the best way of losing weight easily and safely.