

Tips for Cesarean Recovery

If you have time to plan ahead

- Create a birth preferences sheet for cesarean section and discuss with your care providers
- Food
 - Take time to make and freeze healthy meals or set up a meal delivery schedule with friends and family
 - Have paper plates and plastic utensils to use for the first few weeks
- Organize the kitchen and closets so you don't have to reach for things
- Schedule help around the house (friends/family or professional)
- Start taking homeopathic arnica a couple days before the birth

At the hospital

- Request a lactation consultant right away
- Stay on top of your pain management
 - Our bodies do not heal well when in pain
 - We can care better for our babies when we are feeling good
 - Your care providers will advise you on what drugs are safe for breastfeeding
- Pausing to practice a few rounds of deep breathing throughout the day will help keep your lungs healthy when bedridden and encourage relaxation
- Before you are able to get out of bed, gentle movement in bed can help protect against blood clots
 - Wiggle your toes
 - Point and flex your feet
 - Move your ankles around in circles
 - Bend one leg at the knee then stretch it back to a straightened position. Repeat with other leg.
 - Pelvic rocks
- When you're ready, your nurse will encourage you to take gentle walks throughout the day
- When you are able to have fluids again, make sure to stay well hydrated
- When you are able to eat again (probably not until the day after surgery) have friends/family bring you healthy food if you prefer over hospital food
- Restrict visitors and for those who visit, make it short

At home

- Set 'baby stations' up in the bedroom and living room so mom doesn't need to get up much
 - Diaper changing supplies, burp cloths, change of clothes for baby, nipple cream, breast pads, tissues, water for mom, the phone, etc...
- Splurge on some help around the house for the first few weeks (or ask friends and family help)
 - Cleaning service
 - Laundry service
 - Dog walker
 - Childcare for older siblings
 - Postpartum doula (www.with-women.com)
 - I also do postpartum doula work!

- Set up a meal delivery schedule with friends and family
- Hydration and good nourishment supports healing and breastfeeding
 - Make sure to eat food with lots of fiber to discourage constipation
 - Try to go once a day- get glycerin suppositories or stool softeners to help if needed
- Limit the amount of visitors in the first weeks
 - For those who are visiting, limit their time and ask them to do something around the house to help
- Set aside time for relaxation- it helps our bodies heal!
 - Nap when baby naps!
 - Listen to a relaxation CD
 - Let dad take the baby and read a book
- Pelvic floor exercises!
- Taking homeopathic arnica can help you heal
- Don't over do it!
 - Mom should not be doing ANY household duties in the first 2 weeks (no cooking/cleaning)
 - It may be at least 6 weeks before you feel ready to resume 'normal' activities
- Get help with breastfeeding sooner than later if you need it
 - Faith Hughes provides affordable home visits 720.323.9805
- After 6-8 weeks, consider attending (an) ICAN meeting(s)
 - www.ican-online.com or www.icanofcolorado.org
 - The International Cesarean Awareness Network- Providing support for cesarean recovery and promoting VBACs.
 - The Denver chapter meets at the Highlands United Methodist Church (3131 Osceola St., Denver, 80212) the 1st Tuesday of every month at 7pm