Discharge Instructions
for Cesarean Section (C-Section)

You had a cesarean section, or C-section. During the C-section, your baby was delivered through a surgical incision in your abdomen and uterus. Full recovery after a C-section can take time. It’s important to take care of yourself — for your own sake and because your new baby needs you.

Here are some guidelines to follow at home:

**Incision Care**

- Shower as needed. Pat your incision dry.
- Watch your incision for signs of infection, such as increasing redness or drainage.
- Hold a pillow against the incision when you laugh or cough and when you get up from a lying or sitting position.
- Remember, it can take as long as six weeks for a C-section incision to heal.

**Activity**

- Don’t try to take care of anyone other than your baby and yourself.
- Remember, the more active you are, the more likely you are to start bleeding.
- Get lots of rest. Take naps in the afternoon.
- Increase your activities gradually.
- Plan your activities so that you don’t have to go up or down stairs more than necessary.
- Do postsurgical deep breathing and coughing exercises. Ask your doctor for instructions.
- Don’t lift anything heavier than your baby until your doctor tells you it’s okay.
- Don’t drive until your doctor says it’s okay.
• Don’t have sexual intercourse until after you’ve had a follow-up appointment with your doctor and you’ve decided on a birth control method.

• Don’t take a tub bath or use douches or tampons for 4 weeks.

Follow-Up

Make a follow-up appointment as directed by your physician.

When to Call Your Doctor/Warning Signs

Call your doctor right away if you have any of the following:

• Fever of 100.4°F or higher.

• Redness, pain or drainage at your incision site.

• Repeated clots of blood (the size of a quarter or larger) passing from the vagina.

• Bleeding that requires a new sanitary pad every hour.

• Severe pain in the abdomen.

• Pain or urgency with urination.

• Trouble urinating or emptying your bladder.

• No bowel movement within one week after the birth of your baby.

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