

# Postpartum

## Study Group Module



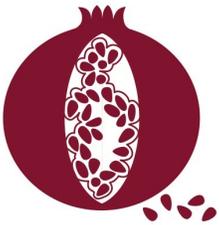
## Learning Objectives

*Review the following Learning Objectives as an organized beginning to your study of this module. As you read the Learning Objectives, note key words that will aid you in finding the information in the texts. When you complete the module, revisit this list and check for areas that require further investigation.*

- Review Third Stage and Hemorrhage modules.
- Understand the importance of postpartum care and support.
- Review the appropriate application of Rhogam.
- Understand the use of sitz baths and other support measures for healing birth tears.
- Identify the range of normal emotional response postpartum.
- Identify the normal postpartum healing cycle: birth tears, lochia, uterine involution, breastfeeding, gradual weight loss and return to fertility.
- Understand how recovery from cesarean section differs from recovery from vaginal birth.
- Identify normal newborn behavior, feeding, urination and bowel movement patterns.
- Identify appropriate treatment for the newborn's umbilical cord.
- Identify the postpartum blues.
- Identify appropriate postpartum exercise.
- Identify normal newborn development.
- Identify support measures for thrush, cradle cap and colic.
- Identify signs of infection or health concerns in the newborn.
- Identify "failure to thrive."
- Identify the issues surrounding circumcision.
- Identify the circumcision medical procedure.
- Identify the signs and symptoms of thrombophlebitis.
- Identify postpartum complications including uterine infection, UTI and mastitis.
- Identify the normal stages of a family's adjustment to their newborn.
- Identify allopathic and non-allopathic remedies for prolonged lochia.
- Describe uterine and bladder prolapse and appropriate support measures"
- Understand the return to fertility and options for birth control.
- Identify the recommended timing for introduction of solid foods to babies.
- Identify aspects of early child development.
- Define co-sleeping.
- Review the Breastfeeding/Chestfeeding module.
- Review the Physical Assessment modules.
- Review the Jaundice module.
- Review the Meconium module.

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- Review the Pharmacology for Midwives module .
- Review the Homeopathy module.
- Review the Nutrition module.
- Review the Perinatal Mental Health module.
- Identify the state health insurance programs and pediatric services available for children in your area.
- Identify the incidence and risk factors for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.
- Create a referral list of pediatricians and other health care providers specializing in infant care.
- Create a referral list of post partum community resources.
- Draft practice guidelines for postpartum care in your own practice.
- Demonstrate your ability to provide postpartum care in the context of your preceptor's practice.
- Describe Out-of-Hospital Newborn Critical Congenital Heart Disease Screening



## Study Sources

*The following texts are recommended for completion of this module. Use them to cross reference and build a more comprehensive understanding. Using key words from the Learning Objectives, search the index. Read those pages listed, and read the chapter in which they are found. Establish a context for the information so that you understand how other topics are related. In addition, read the chapter headings in the Table of Contents, and flip through each text to familiarize yourself with the content of chapters. As you work through Study Group modules, you will eventually read each text in its entirety.*

- Varney's Midwifery
- Myles Textbook for Midwives
- Holistic Midwifery, Vol. I, II, III (when available), Frye
- Birth Emergency Skills Training, Gruenberg
- Assessment and Care of the Well Newborn, Thureen, Deacon, O'Neill, Hernandez
- Breastfeeding: A Guide for the Medical Professional, Lawrence & Lawrence
- The Baby Book, Sears & Sears
- After the Baby's Birth: A Woman's Way to Wellness, Lim
- Our Bodies, Ourselves, Boston Women's Health Book Collective
- Herbal for the Childbearing Year, Weed
- Naturally Healthy Babies and Children, Romm
- Natural Health After Birth, Romm
- The Nourishing Traditions Book of Baby and Child Care, Fallon
- The Gentle Art of Newborn Family Care, Webber
- The First Forty Days, Ou
- The Fourth Trimester, Johnson

- See NMI website Postpartum module web resources for additional information and up-to-date sources



## *Related Topics*

- Suturing
- Breastfeeding/Chestfeeding
- Physical Assessment of the Newborn
- Jaundice
- Meconium
- Well Person Care
- Pharmacology for Midwives
- Complementary and Alternative Medicine
- Nutrition
- Perinatal Mental Health
- Grieving and Self-Care

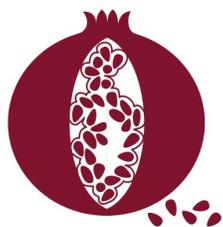


## *Questions Requiring Longer, Thoughtful Answers & Explanations*

1. Describe the care that you provide as a midwife in the first few hours after birth.
2. What instructions do you give parents about “when to call the midwife” with postpartum concerns or questions?
3. What does postpartum care provide to new mothers/gestational parents and newborns?
4. What do you suggest to your clients to prepare for the postpartum period?
5. Describe what you do during each of your scheduled postpartum visits.
6. What instructions and advice do you provide for new parents during the first three days postpartum? Be specific.
7. What additional advice do you have for someone recovering from a cesarean?
8. Describe when and how you review the birth with parents.
9. How do you involve siblings or other family members in postpartum care?
10. Describe the use of sitz baths for healing birth tears. What is your recipe?
11. What additional support can you offer for the healing of birth tears?

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12. Why do babies cry?
13. What can be done, or tried, to calm a fussy baby?
14. Describe the behavior of a baby with colic. What support measures do you advise for colic?
15. What advice do you offer in response to thrush? Include instructions for treating thrush in mouth and on skin.
16. Describe insecure and avoidant attachment.
17. What information do you provide to parents regarding circumcision? What information do you provide about the care of a circumcised or intact penis?
18. What do you recommend for exercise postpartum?
19. Your client gave birth last week and reports lochia has been wavering between serosa and alba, but tonight after spending the afternoon at the farmer's market the lochia is bright red. How do you respond?
20. What is your experience/observation with co-sleeping?
21. What are the guidelines for safe co-sleeping?
22. When and what do you discuss with postpartum clients regarding their interest in and return to sexual activity?
23. In the context of returning to fertility after childbirth and continued breastfeeding/chestfeeding, what are the pros and cons of the following forms of birth control:
  - a. condoms
  - b. cervical cap
  - c. diaphragm
  - d. IUD
  - e. birth control pills
  - f. Depo-Provera
  - g. Norplant
  - h. fertility awareness methods



## *Short Answer Questions*

### Questions about the birthing parent

24. Discuss postpartum administration of Rhogam.
  - a. What are the indications for postpartum Rhogam?
  - b. When is it administered?
  - c. Why might someone decline Rhogam?
  - d. How do you give informed consent around declining Rhogam?

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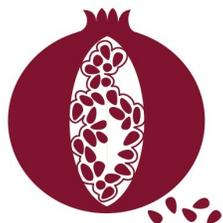
25. Discuss postpartum thrombophlebitis.
  - a. What are the symptoms of thrombophlebitis, both superficial and deep?
  - b. What is the appropriate response to thrombophlebitis?
  - c. What is the greatest risk concern with thrombophlebitis?
26. What is lochia? Describe the stages of lochia flow.
27. How soon do you anticipate a newly postpartum person's fundus to be at their pubic bone height?
28. What is your postpartum visit schedule?
29. Why do postpartum clients experience increased perspiration?
30. Your client gave birth last week. They have been taking it easy, staying horizontal to ease the heavy feeling they have in their perineum. They tell you that when they are on their feet, it feels like their "innards could just drop out". What are your concerns and how do you advise this person?
31. How much weight might a client lose in the first week postpartum?
32. How do you advise new parents regarding sleep and infant demands?
33. What contributes to postpartum blues, and when are they likely to occur?
34. Why might a person with a great partner, a healthy baby and wonderful birth story still experience grief?
35. What are the symptoms of a uterine infection?
36. Your client has a fever of 103.6. What is the differential diagnosis? What must you rule out as sites of infection postpartum to focus on the problematic site? What is your response?
37. Your client has had serosa/alba lochia for three weeks. What can you recommend?
38. What is the pharmaceutical medication for prolonged lochia?
39. What is a diastasis? Do your check for diastasis and if found how do you advise?

Questions about the baby

40. Describe how you tell parents to care for the newborn's umbilical cord.
41. During the initial postpartum period, what is the recommendation for Vitamin K administration? What options for administration do families have?

42. What tests are included in the newborn screen?
43. Describe your informed choice for the newborn screen including optimal screening time? Do you provide it or refer for it?
44. During the initial postpartum period, what medication is used for neonatal ophthalmia prophylaxis? AND what is the current research on this?
45. What general guidelines confirm that a baby is doing well?
46. What are the concerning signs to watch for in the care of a newborn?
47. What urination and bowel movement patterns do you expect in the first days postpartum for the baby?
48. What is normal weight loss and weight gain in the immediate postpartum for babies? How often do you weigh babies? When should they have regained their birthweight?
49. When should baby have its first bath? What are the current thoughts on this?
50. How can baby best get needed Vitamin D?
51. How warmly should infants be dressed?
52. What prevents diaper rash?
53. What causes cradle cap?
54. What do you recommend in response to cradle cap?
55. Define "failure to thrive." What is your response to failure to thrive?
56. What is the current thought on risk factors and incidence on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome? What does current research say?
57. Discuss common developmental markers for babies.
  - a. When is it appropriate to introduce food other than breastmilk to the infant?
  - b. What resources do you recommend for parents to learn about which foods should be introduced first?
  - c. When do babies begin to hold their heads up?
  - d. At what age do most babies hold their head steady while sitting upright?
  - e. When do signs of teething begin, and what are these signs?
  - f. When can babies usually begin to roll over, tummy to back?
  - g. When can babies begin to sit in highchairs?
  - h. When do babies begin crawling?
  - i. When do babies begin walking?
  - j. When do babies begin talking in words?
  - k. What age is reasonable to begin toilet training?

58. What is Elimination Communication?



## Projects

Send completed projects with the rest of your course work for this module.

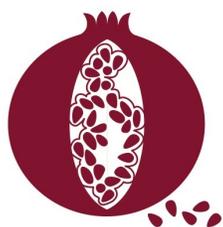
59. Make a referral list for your clients of local resources. Include: yoga and postpartum exercise classes, postpartum support groups, breastfeeding/ chestfeeding support, breast pump rentals, pelvic floor physiotherapists, IBCLCs, CLCs, PMAD support, and others.

60. Create a referral list of pediatricians and other health care providers specializing in infant care. Include referrals for circumcision.

61. Research the state health insurance programs and pediatric services available for children in your area. Make a referral sheet with access info for clients.

62. Choose a book about the postpartum period to recommend to your clients. Write a review about your recommendation, include title, author, publisher and date of publication.

63. Draft practice guidelines for postpartum care in your own practice. Include reference to your visit schedule, physical assessments made during visits, consultation resources, specific areas that you monitor and chart. Submit this draft along with this module, and include it later in your Practice Guidelines projects (in the Charting and Practice Guidelines Module.)



## Skills Review

Following are excerpts from the NMI forms for assessment of midwifery skills, which include all skills identified and required by NARM. Review the following skills and consider how they each relate to the content of this module. If you are currently working with a preceptor, take this opportunity to focus on these areas. During Supervised Primary Care you will formally evaluate these skills together using the NMI forms *Form 52 - Assessment of Student's Midwifery Skills* and : *Form 53 - Student Self-Assessment of Midwifery Skills*.

1. Midwifery Counseling, Education and Communication:
  - A. Provides interactive support and counseling and/or referral services to the mother regarding her relationships with her significant others and other health care providers
  - C. Provides education and counseling based on maternal health/reproductive/family history and ongoing risk assessment

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- F. Educates the mother concerning the natural physical and emotional processes of pregnancy, labor, birth and postpartum
  - G. Applies the principles of informed consent
  - H. Provides individualized care
  - I. Advocates for the mother during pregnancy, birth and postpartum
  - J. Provides education, counseling and/or referral, where appropriate for:
    1. Diet, nutrition and supplements
    2. Situations requiring an immediate call to the midwife
    3. Complications
    4. Newborn care including normal/abnormal newborn activity, responses, vital signs, appearance, behavior, etc.
    5. Postpartum care concerning complications and self-care
2. General Health care Skills:
- D. Demonstrates the use of instruments and equipment including:
    1. Bulb syringe
    2. Cord clamp 6. cord tape
    3. Lancets
    4. Newborn and adult scale
    5. Thermometer
  - F. Uses alternate health care practices (non-allopathic treatments) and modalities
    1. Herbs
    2. Hydrotherapy (baths, compresses, showers, etc.)
  - G. Refers to alternate health care practitioners for non-allopathic treatments
  - H. Treats for shock by:
    1. Recognizing the signs and symptoms of shock, or impending shock
    2. Assessing the cause of shock
    3. Assessing the cause of shock and providing treatment for shock by:
      - a) Positioning mother flat, legs elevated 12 inches
      - b) Keeping the mother warm, avoiding overheating
      - c) Administering/using non-allopathic remedies
      - d) Encouraging deep, calm, centered breathing
      - e) Administering oral isotonic/electrolyte fluids
      - f) Activating emergency medical services
      - g) Preparing to transport
  - K. Administers the following pharmacologic (prescriptive) agents:
    3. Methergine
    4. Prescriptive ophthalmic prophylaxis ointment (e.g., erythromycin)
3. Maternal Health Assessment:
- K. Recognizes and responds to potential prenatal complications by:
    1. Identifying pregnancy-induced hypertension
    2. Assessing, educating and counseling for pregnancy-induced hypertension with:
      - a) Nutrition/hydration assessment,
      - b) Administration of calcium/magnesium supplement

- c) Stress assessment and management,
  - d) Non-allopathic remedies,
  - e) monitor for signs and symptoms of increased severity,
  - f) Assessment for drug abuse, g) increased frequency of maternal assessments
3. Identifying preeclampsia
  4. Collaborating and managing preeclamptic mothers
  5. Identifying breech presentations
  6. Turning breech presentations with:
    - a) Alternative positions (tilt boards, exercises),
    - b) Non-allopathic methods
4. Labor, Birth and Immediate Postpartum
    - D. Assesses the condition of, and provides care for the newborn by:
      - 1) keeping baby warm,
      - 2) making initial newborn assessment
      3. Determining APGAR score at:
        - a) 1 minute, b) 5 minutes, c) 10 minutes (as appropriate)
      4. Performing routine suctioning
      5. Keeping mother and baby together
      6. Monitoring respiratory and cardiac function by assessing:
        - a) the symmetry of the chest,
        - b) the sound and rate of heart tones and respirations,
        - c) nasal flaring, d) grunting, e) retractions, f) circumoral cyanosis, g) central cyanosis (check color)
      10. clamping the cord after the cord stops pulsing
      11. cutting the cord
      - 12 caring for the cord including:
        - a) evaluating the cord stump,
        - b) collecting a blood sample,
        - c) treating the cord stump with:
          - 1) alcohol, 2) non-allopathic remedies
      13. Administering eye prophylaxis
      14. Performing a newborn examination by assessing:
        - a) newborn general appearance,
        - b) newborn alertness,
        - c) the head for:
          - 1) molding,
          - 2) hematoma,
          - 3) caput,
          - 4) sutures,
          - 5) fontanelles,
          - 6) measurement,
        - d) the eyes for:
          - 1) jaundice,
          - 2) pupil conditions,
          - 3) tracking,
          - 4) spacing,
        - e) the ears for:
          - 1) positioning,
          - 2) response to sound,

- 3) patency,
- 4) cartilage,
- f) the mouth for:
  - 1) appearance and feel of palate,
  - 2) lip and mouth color,
  - 3) tongue,
  - 4) lip cleft,
  - 5) signs of dehydration,
- g) the nose for:
  - 1) patency,
  - 2) flaring nostrils,
- h) the neck for:
  - 1) enlarged glands,
  - 2) trachea placement,
- i) the clavicle for:
  - 1) integrity,
  - 2) symmetry,
- j) the chest for:
  - 1) symmetry,
  - 2) nipples,
  - 3) breast enlargement including discharge,
  - 4) measurement (chest circumference,
  - 5) monitor heart for irregularities and count heartrate,
  - 6) auscultate the lungs, front and back for:
    - a) breath sounds,
    - b) auscultate the bronchioles,
    - c) equal bilateral expansion,
    - d) respiration count,
- k) the abdomen for:
  - 1) enlarged organs, 2) masses, 3) hernias,
  - 4) bowel sounds,
- l) femoral pulses,
- m) the groin for swollen glands,
- n) the genitalia for:
  - 1) appearance,
  - 2) testicle for:
    - a) descent, b) rugae, c) herniation,
  - 3) labia separation,
  - 4) discharge,
- o) the rectum for:
  - 1) patency, 2) meconium,
- p) the hips for abduction,
- q) the legs for:
  - 1) symmetry, 2) equal length, 3) sickle foot/ ankle,
- r) the feet for:
  - 1) digits, number, webbing, 2) creases,
  - 3) reflexes, 4) length of toenails,

- s) the arms for symmetry in:
  - 1) structure, 2) movement,
- t) the hands for:
  - 1) number of digits, 2) finger taper, 3) Simian crease, 4) length of nails,
- u) the backside of baby for:
  - 1) symmetry of hips, 2) condition of the spine:
    - a) dimpling, b) holes, c) straightness,
- v) temperature via:
  - 1) axillary, 2) rectal,
- w) reflexes:
  - 1) flexion of extremities and muscle tone, 3) sucking, 3) moro,
  - 4) Babinski, 5) Plantar/palmar, 6) stepping, 7) grasp, 8) rooting,
- x) gestational age,
- y) skin condition for:
  - 1) color, 2) lesions, 3) birthmarks, 4) milia, 5) vernix, 6) lanugo,
  - 7) peeling, 8) rashes,
- z) length of baby,
- aa) weight

#### 4. Labor, Birth and Immediate Postpartum

##### F. Assesses general condition of mother and newborn by:

- 1. Assessing bladder distention
- 3. Assessing lochia
- 5. Assessing condition of vagina, cervix and perineum for: a) cystocele, b) rectocele, c) hematoma, d) tears, e) lacerations, f) hemorrhoids, g) bruising
- 7. Providing instruction for care and treatment of the perineum
- 8. Facilitating breastfeeding by assisting and teaching about:
  - a) positioning for mother and baby,
  - b) skin-to-skin contact, c) latching on,
  - d) adequate maternal hydration,
  - e) adequate maternal nutrition, adequate maternal rest,
  - g) feeding patterns,
  - h) maternal comfort measures for engorgement,
  - i) letdown reflex,
  - j) milk expression

#### 5. Postpartum

##### A. Performs postpartum reevaluation of mother and baby at:

- 1. Day-one to day-two
- 2. Day-three to day-four
- 3. One to two weeks
- 4. Three to four weeks
- 5. Six to eight weeks

##### B. Completes the birth certificate

##### C. Provides contraceptive education and counseling

##### D. Assesses for, and treats jaundice by:

- 1. Administering non-allopathic treatments to nursing mother
- 2. Administering non-allopathic treatments to baby

3. Encouraging mother to breastfeed every two hours
  4. Exposing front and back of newborn to sunlight through window glass
  5. Assessing baby for lethargy,
  6. Consulting or referring
  - E. Provides direction for care of circumcised penis
  - F. Provides direction for care of uncircumcised penis
  - G. Performs maternal four- to six-week postpartum check-up assessing for:
    1. Postpartum subjective history
    2. Lochia
    3. Return of menses
  - H. Treats thrush on nipples by encouraging/administering:
    1. Drying nipples after nursing
    2. Changing the pH of nipples by using non-allopathic remedies
    3. Rinsing nipples before next nursing
  - J. Treats mastitis by:
    1. Providing immune system support including:
      - a) nutrition/hydration,
      - b) vitamins,
      - c) non-allopathic remedies,
    2. Encouraging multiple nursing positions,
      3. Applying herbal compresses,
      4. Applying warmth, soaking in tub or by shower,
      5. Teaching mother to empty breasts at each feeding,
      6. Providing/teaching gentle massage of sore spots,
      7. Encouraging adequate rest/relaxation,
      8. Wearing brassiere,
      9. Assessing for signs and symptoms of infections
7. Well-Baby Care
- A. Provides well-baby care during the first two - six weeks
  - B. Assesses the general health and appearance of baby including:
    1. Temperature,
    2. Heart rate, rhythm and regularity,
    3. Respirations,
    4. Weight,
    5. Length,
    6. Measurement of circumference of head,
    7. Neuro-muscular response,
    8. Level of alertness,
    9. Wake/sleep cycles,
    10. Feeding patterns,
    11. Urination and stool for frequency, quality and color,
    12. Appearance of skin,
    13. Jaundice,
    14. Condition of cord
  - C. Provides treatment of skin conditions such as:
    1. Diaper rash
    2. Cradle cap
  - D. Provides treatment of thrush
  - E. Provides treatment for colic



## Study Group Module Evaluation Sheet

We'd like to know what you think of the course work we ask you to complete. Please comment on this module and return this form to NMI along with your completed module.

Name of Module: Postpartum

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What did you like about this module?
2. Were there any surprises for you in this module?
3. Was there anything in this module that was particularly challenging for you?
4. What will completing this module bring to your midwifery practice?
5. Do you feel you met this module's stated learning objectives?
6. Did the learning activities enable you to meet the learning objectives?
7. Were the suggested learning resources (books and materials) adequate to meet the learning objectives?
8. Did you utilize additional resources?
9. Any comments/Suggestions for improving this module?

Thank you!