

Post Partum Care

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 which 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 post partum 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 post partum.
- Identify the normal post partum healing cycle: birth tears, lochia, uterine involution, breast feeding, 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 post partum blues.
- Identify appropriate post partum 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 post partum 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.
- Identify the occurrence of prolapsed uterus and bladder 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.

Continued...

Post Partum Care

Learning Objectives, continued

- Identify aspects of early child development.
- Define the family bed.
- Review the Breastfeeding module.
- Review the Physical Assessment module.
- Review the Jaundice module.
- Review the Meconium module.
- Review the Well Woman Care module (birth control).
- Review the Pharmacology for Midwives module .
- Review the Homeopathy module.
- Review the Nutrition module.
- Review the Post Partum Depression 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 post partum care in your own practice.
- Demonstrate your ability to provide post partum care in the context of your preceptor's practice.

Post Partum Care, continued

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

Homeopathic Medicines for Pregnancy and Childbirth, Moskowitz

Naturally Healthy Babies and Children, Romm

Related Topics

- ◇ Suturing
- ◇ Parenting
- ◇ Female sexuality
- ◇ Siblings

Post Partum Questions

Essay

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 post partum concerns or questions?
3. What does post partum care provide to new mothers and newborns?
4. What do you suggest to your clients to prepare for the post partum period?
5. Describe what you do during each of your scheduled post partum visits.
6. What instructions and advice do you provide for new parents during the first three days post partum? Be specific.
7. What additional advice do you have for a mom 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 post partum 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?
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?

Continued...

Post Partum Questions, continued

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 post partum?
19. Your client gave birth last week. Her lochia has been wavering between serosa and alba, but tonight she reports that she spent the afternoon at the farmer's market and now her lochia is bright red. How do you respond?
20. What is your experience/observation with the family bed?
21. What do you discuss with post partum moms regarding their interest in and return to sexual activity?

Questions

1. What are the indications for post partum Rhogam, and when is it administered?
2. What tests are included in the "PKU" screen?
3. How do you direct parents regarding the PKU screen? Do you provide it or refer for it?
4. During the initial post partum period, what medication is used for eye prophylaxis?
5. What general guidelines confirm that a baby is doing well?
6. What are the danger signs to watch for in the care of a newborn?

Continued...

Post Partum Questions, continued

7. What urination and bowel movement patterns do you expect in the first days post partum?
8. What are the symptoms of thrombophlebitis, both superficial and deep?
9. What is the appropriate response to thrombophlebitis?
10. What is the greatest risk concern with thrombophlebitis?
11. What is lochia? Describe the stages of lochia flow.
12. How soon do you anticipate a newly post partum woman's fundus to be at her pubic bone height?
13. How warmly should infants be dressed?
14. What is your post partum visit schedule?
15. Why do post partum women experience increased perspiration?
16. Your client gave birth last week. She's been taking it easy, staying horizontal to ease the heavy feeling she has in her perineum. She tells you that when she's on her feet, she feels like her inards could just drop out. What do you suggest?
17. How much weight might a woman lose in the first week post partum?
18. What is a diastasis?
19. What prevents diaper rash?
20. What causes cradle cap?
21. What do you recommend in response to cradle cap?

Continued...

Post Partum Questions, continued

22. Define "failure to thrive."
23. How do you advise new parents regarding sleep and infant demands?
24. What contributes to postpartum blues, and when are they likely to occur?
25. Why might a woman with a great partner, a healthy baby and wonderful birth story still experience grief?
26. What are the symptoms of a uterine infection?
27. Your client has a fever of 103.6. What is the differential diagnosis? What must you rule out as sites of infection post partum to focus on the problematic site? What is your response?
28. Your client has had serosa/alba lochia for three weeks. What can you recommend?
29. What is the pharmaceutical medication for prolonged lochia?
30. When is it appropriate to introduce food other than breastmilk to the infant?
31. Which solid foods, when?
32. In the context of returning to fertility after childbirth and continued nursing, what are the pros and cons of the following forms of birth control:
 - condoms
 - cervical cap
 - diaphragm
 - IUD
 - birth control pills
 - Depo-Provera
 - Norplant
 - natural family planning

Continued...

Post Partum Questions, continued

33. When do babies begin to hold their heads up?
34. At what age do most babies hold their head steady while sitting upright?
35. When do signs of teething begin, and what are these signs?
36. When can babies usually begin to roll over, tummy to back?
37. When can babies begin to sit in high chairs?
38. When do babies begin crawling?
39. When do babies begin walking?
40. When do babies begin talking in words?
41. What age is reasonable to begin toilet training?

Continued...

Post Partum Questions, continued

Projects (send completed projects with the rest of your course work for this module)

1. Make a referral list for your clients of local resources. Include:
 - yoga and post partum exercise classes
 - mom's support groups
 - breastfeeding support and pump rentals
2. Create a referral list of pediatricians and other health care providers specializing in infant care. Include referrals for circumcision.
3. Research the state health insurance programs and pediatric services available for children in your area. Make a referral sheet with access info for clients.
4. Choose a book about the post partum period to recommend to your clients. Write a review about your recommendation, include title, author, publisher and date of publication.
5. Draft practice guidelines for post partum 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 and include it later in your Practice Guidelines projects (in the Charting and Practice Guidelines Module.)

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Post Partum Skills,

Skills

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 form *Preceptor Evaluation/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 on-going risk assessment
- F. Educates the mother concerning the natural physical and emotional processes of pregnancy, labor, birth and post partum
- 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:
 - 4. Diet, nutrition and supplements
 - 6. Situations requiring an immediate call to the midwife
 - 8. Complications
 - 10. Newborn care including normal/abnormal newborn activity, responses, vital signs, appearance, behavior, etc.
 - 11. Postpartum care concerning complications and self-care

2. General Health care Skills:

- D. Demonstrates the use of instruments and equipment including:
 - 4. Bulb syringe
 - 5. Cord clamp 6. cord tape
 - 13. Lancets
 - 14. Newborn and adult scale
 - 23. 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

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Post Partum Skills, continued

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

Continued...

Post Partum Skills, continued

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)5minutes, 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)fontanel, 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,

Continued...

Post Partum Skills, continued

j) the chest for:

1) symmetry, 2) nipples, 3) breast enlargement including discharge, 4) measurement (chest circumference, 5) monitor heart for irregularities and count heart rate, 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,

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Post Partum Skills, continued

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 post partum 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

Continued...

Post Partum Skills, continued

- 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 post-partum check-up assessing for:
 - 1. Post partum 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

Continued...

Post Partum Skills, continued

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