**Postpartum Instructions**

***Care for Mother:***

1. Do nothing but rest and take care of your new baby for the first week! Find help for housework, cooking and childcare for two weeks. Add activity after the first week as you feel like it. Be sure to rest when you get tired. **Your body will revolt if you overdo!**

2. Continue with pregnancy diet and vitamins while you are nursing. Add more liquids to help with milk production. Avoid caffeinated drinks such as coffee, excess tea, colas, while you are nursing, as these may upset your baby. To prevent constipation try prune juice, bran cereal and other fiber rich foods.

3. Air dry your nipples several times a day and keep them from cracking with A & D ointment, lanolin or vitamin E oil. None of these need to be washed off before nursing. If your breasts become engorged apply hot/warm compresses, stand in hot shower and express some milk before feeding so baby can latch on correctly.

4. Try to empty your bladder every 2 hours, while you are awake, for the first few days. If you have had lacerations/tears or stitches, rinse the perineal area with warm chamomile tea or lavender oil and water and pat dry. Also exposing the area to air several times a day helps the healing process.

5. You may pass some clots the first few days after birth. This is normal. If you begin to bleed heavily, such as saturating a thick pad in less than 30 minutes, lie down, massage the fundus/top of your uterus, nurse the baby, and CALL if it doesn't improve quickly (within 15min).

6. If you have severe uterine pain, foul odor to the lochia/bleeding, or increased redness or heat to the vaginal area, call right away.

7. If you have stitches or a perineal tear, keep your legs together at all times to insure proper healing.

8. Unless you have stitches, resume doing kegel exercises the day after the birth. If you have had stitches, wait for two weeks before resuming kegels.

9. Call if you develop a fever.

10. Go to the ER if: you have saturated 2 pads in under 2 hours or have a fever of 100.4 not relieved by Tylenol and accompanied by severe uterine pain.

***Care for Newborn:***

1. Keep a bulb syringe handy in case your baby's nose or mouth needs suctioning. Some babies have more mucous than others and may occasionally appear to gag or choke. We'll show you how to position the baby and how best to use the bulb syringe.

2. Air dry the baby's cord stump. Recent research shows it dries up and falls off more quickly with no treatment. Keep the diaper away from it.

3. Remember that breast milk digests rapidly and your baby may want to nurse frequently, even every hour. If you have concerns about breastfeeding please call me or La Leche League before reaching for a bottle.

4. If your baby develops jaundice (turns yellow) - please call us right away for instructions on care.

5. Call immediately if the baby develops a fever or becomes lethargic.

6. Go to the ER if baby’s temp is over 99.5 and is lethargic and accompanied by high pitched screaming.

If you find yourself in an EMERGENT situation DO NOT HESITATE to call 911!