

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS TO SEEK SUPPORT

Perineal & Cesarean Birth Incision & Scar Care:

Please monitor your incision or healing scar in your first weeks postpartum! Although many women feel squeamish about looking at their scars, this monitoring can give you a ton of information, help you prevent problems, and catch any issues early. If you are too uncomfortable to check your scar yourself, that's ok. Please have a partner or family member check on your healing at least every few days. Let your medical professional know if you notice:

- Increasing/expanding redness
- Increasing swelling after the first week, not related to increasing activity
- New discharge (especially if yellow or greenish)
- Change and/or increase in smell
- Onset of fever
- Increased pain, not related to increasing activity
- Incision has opened further**
- Incision is still open after 4 weeks**

Bladder & Bowel Leakage:

Although leakage is common postpartum, that doesn't mean it's normal and something you just have to get used to! Please consider seeking a pelvic floor evaluation if you are still experiencing leakage after several weeks postpartum. Below is a guideline for when to seek support, but different timelines may be appropriate for different people.

- Experience urinary leakage after 6 weeks
- Fecal leakage after 6 weeks
- Inability to control gas after 3 months
- Leakage with exercise or activity at 4 months despite trying kegels

Pelvic Organ Prolapse:

Many women notice prolapse symptoms (pelvic heaviness etc) right away, and others may not feel these symptoms until they are more active or returning to exercise. Here are some signs you should seek a pelvic floor PT evaluation:

- Your pelvic pain/heaviness limits your ability to function at the end of the day
- You feel vaginal or rectal tissue externally at points during the day
- Your prolapse limits your ability to have a bowel movement or urinate - perhaps you need to push up on the tissue (splint) in order to void
- You know you have a prolapse but want to return to running/jumping sports

Painful Intercourse:

It is not recommended to return to intercourse prior to 6 weeks postpartum. It's common to have pain initially with intercourse postpartum, but about 1 in 5 women are still having pain 18 months postpartum! We need to fix this! Please reach out if:

- You are having pain with intercourse despite trying different lubricants

Disclaimer: This list is meant as a guideline only. I strongly believe every postpartum woman could benefit from a consult with a pelvic floor physical therapist. If you have earlier concerns about your health or healing, please contact your medical team!