

STANDARD FOR POST PARTUM CARE OF MOTHER AND INFANT

INTRODUCTION

The Postpartum period is a transitional time for mother and baby and the family, emotionally, socially and physiologically. Ongoing Postpartum Care provides the following:

- Opportunities for health promotion;
- Opportunities for the early detection and adequate management of problems;
- Support for the developing relationship of the family unit;
- Education and support for increasing knowledge and confidence of mother and father in their parenting roles.

DEFINITIONS

- Fourth Stage begins after the delivery of the placenta, and ends two hours later.
- The immediate postpartum is defined as the end of the fourth stage of labour to 48 hours after the birth.
- The late postpartum period begins at 48 hours after birth and continues for 6 weeks.

RESPONSIBILITIES THROUGHOUT THE POSTPARTUM PERIOD

The midwife will undertake the following:

- Make assessments, develops plan of care, takes appropriate action, evaluates care for both mother and infant;
- Document according to the College's Policy on Records.
- Care for mother and infant together unless there is a medical indication to separate them;
- Care for and examine the infant within the parent's field of vision;
- Support breastfeeding or the chosen feeding method of the mother;
- Assess and support the developing relationship between mother, infant and family;
- Continue educating the mother and her family concerning the care of the recovering woman and the newborn;
- Assess and support the mother's physiological and emotional adaptation and recovery from labour and birth.

FOURTH STAGE:

The midwife will:

- Provide continual care to mother and infant;

- Support the establishment of effective respiration and circulation in the newborn and resuscitate if necessary;
- Maintain adequate body temperature in the newborn;
- Perform an initial newborn examination;
- Encourage initiation of breastfeeding within the first hour;
- Administer Vitamin K with parents' consent;
- Administer antibiotic eye prophylactic with parents' consent;

IMMEDIATE POSTPARTUM

The midwife will:

- Visit the woman and baby within the first calendar day following the day of birth with additional phone calls and visits as needed.
- Complete a comprehensive newborn examination and assessment within 24 hours of the birth.

THE LATE POSTPARTUM

The midwife will:

- Schedule 2 or more visits in the first week and a visit at two or three weeks. These may be a combination of telephone and in-person visits. Additional visits will be conducted as necessary;
- Conduct Metabolic screening on the infant as per Provincial Guideline;
- Schedule a six-week visit to physically examine mother and baby. (Offer cervical screening to the mother);
- Discuss general well being, family planning, community services and ongoing health care;
- Refer to physician, public health nurse and community services;
- Facilitate closure of the relationship;
- Complete documentation and close the file.

REFERENCES:

Davis, Elizabeth et al. "Heart and Hands, A Midwife's Guide to Pregnancy and Birth" 3rd ed. (California Celestial Arts) 1997.

Family Centered Maternity and Newborn Care; National Guidelines / Health Canada 2000; ISBN 0-662-28702-9. This publication is also available on Internet at the following address: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca>

Varney, H. et al. Varney's Midwifery 4th^d ed. 1997(Jones & Bartlet Publisher, Inc.)