

# Postpartum care: recovering from birth



Dear new mother,

Congratulations on delivering your new-born daughter/son. We sincerely hope you had a pleasant stay with us. In the following paragraphs we have summarised some important guidelines for the coming weeks. Please study these closely and we wish you and your family all the best!

**Your obstetric team from Klinikum Dritter Orden**

## Hygiene

**Showers:** possible at any time.

**Bathing:** only after the birth injury or caesarean wound has healed. **Do not use tampons (risk of infection), only pads.**

## Lochia (vaginal discharge)

**Duration:** 3 - 6 weeks

**Different phases:** steadily decreasing;

Colour change: reddish – brownish – yellowish – whitish.

## Reasons to inform your midwife or doctor

- Sudden drying up of the lochia, although it was still flowing the day before and although the phases have not yet been run through
- Persistent, very strong lochia (heavy bleeding, more than your normal period bleeding)
- Odour-changed lochia (foul smelling)
- Abdominal pain
- Fever
- Inflammation of the breast/breasts (painful, overheated and reddened breast, fever, strong feeling of illness)

## Bladder and bowel function

You should make sure to urinate regularly, as the bladder filling is in many cases not being noticed post-partum. Being constipated is common following childbirth, so make sure you eat a high-fibre diet and have regular bowel movements.

## Post-partum involution

The pelvic floor was stretched during childbirth. Therefore, you should avoid any heavy lifting for the first six weeks.

To prevent pelvic floor dysfunction (especially involuntary loss of urine), post-natal exercises are very important. Initially easy exercises (in consultation with your midwife) are recommended, from six weeks after the birth we recommend a postnatal course (e.g., in the **parenting school** at Klinikum Dritter Orden: [www.hausderfamilie.de](http://www.hausderfamilie.de), or also at [www.ag-ggup.de](http://www.ag-ggup.de)). The costs for these courses are covered by your health insurance.

## Contraception

Breastfeeding is not a form of contraception.

Let your gynaecologist advise you on various contraceptive options while breastfeeding.

## Medication

- Breastfeeding women have an **increased need for iodine**. We recommend substituting iodine during the complete breastfeeding period (100 µg 1x daily, with twins 200µg 1x daily.). If any thyroid-dysfunction is known, only in consultation with your doctor.
- If you are taking L-Thyroxine or Euthyrox for hypothyroidism, you should reduce the dose.
- Either take the dose you were taking before you became pregnant or reduce it by half. You should have your thyroid levels checked four weeks after the birth.
- If the haemoglobin value (red blood cells) is low, we recommend taking iron (e.g., in the form of “Kräuterblutsaft” or iron tablets).
- If you need any other medication, consult your doctor which medication is safe while breastfeeding.

## General information about breastfeeding

- Many problems such as sore nipples or engorgement can be prevented by latching the child correctly. When leaving our clinic, you should be able to position your child in several breastfeeding positions (e.g. cradle grip, back grip, breastfeeding while lying down). The baby should be able to grasp the nipple and areola well, as breastfeeding isn't painful this way.
- You should breastfeed your baby at least eight times in 24 hours for the first four weeks.

- Bottle teats, pacifiers and nipple shields can lead to suction confusion and should therefore be avoided as much as possible in the beginning. Drink enough, about three litres daily (still water, mineral water, tea)
- If possible, sleep when your baby sleeps. Stress and physical exhaustion have a negative effect on the milk yield.
- If you are not breastfeeding, you should feed it Formula for at least the first 6 months, as this is most like breast milk. If there is a family history of allergies, Hypoallergenic Formula should be given.
- New-borns have a great need for skin contact, which can be expressed, among other things, by restlessness in the early evening and night hours. Getting to know your child's special needs can happen the easiest during the „24-hour rooming-in“, while having your child with you day and night. You can do this here in the clinic, while being able to rely on professional advice at any time.

## Advice and support

- You should inform your midwife (Nachsorgehebamme), who will continue to look after you at home. You are entitled to midwife help for the entire breastfeeding period.  
If you do not yet have a midwife, you can find contacts at [www.hebavaria.de](http://www.hebavaria.de) or [www.hausderfamilie.de](http://www.hausderfamilie.de) (→ Hebammensprechstunde)
- Additional help can be provided by lactation consultants: [www.bdl-stillen.de](http://www.bdl-stillen.de)
- There are breastfeeding groups in many places, and you can also get advice in this way: [www.bdl-stillen.de](http://www.bdl-stillen.de)

- During the postnatal period, mood swings due to hormonal changes are quite normal, postpartum depression can develop rarely. Don't be afraid to ask for outside help. Possible contacts are your midwife or your doctor. A helpful web address is [www.schatten-und-licht.de](http://www.schatten-und-licht.de).

## Formalities

- You can request your child's birth certificate at [www.geburtenbuero.de](http://www.geburtenbuero.de) at the earliest 5 - 10 days after the birth online.
- Send a copy of the birth certificate to the health insurance company with which your child will be insured.
- To receive maternity benefit (Mutterschaftsgeld), you must also send a copy of the birth certificate to your health insurance.
- You can apply for parental allowance from the Bavarian Center for Social Affairs and Family ([www.zbfs.bayern.de](http://www.zbfs.bayern.de)).
- You can get the application for state child benefit from your employer (if you work in the public sector) or from the the Employment Agency (Agentur für Arbeit/Arbeitsamt). Payments are also made retrospectively.

## Important appointments

- Sometime between the third and fifth day after birth it is necessary to have your tested for metabolic diseases (newborn screening/NBS). This usually happens during your inpatient stay.
- The 2nd check-up (U2) takes place between the 3rd and 10th day of life. If this due to an earlier discharge has not yet been carried out, please contact your paediatrician.
- You should see your gynaecologist again in about 6 weeks.

