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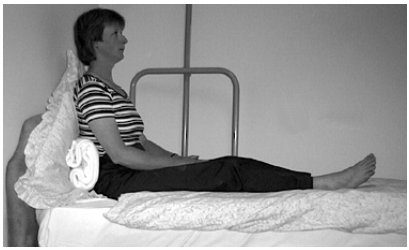
Following a Caesarean birth



One + all | we care

We hope this information will help you as you return to normal after the birth of your baby.

Sitting

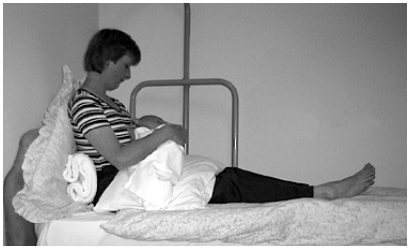


You may be more comfortable with a pillow or rolled towel in the small of your back.

Bending one or both knees up from time to time may help to ease discomfort.

Make sure you are well supported because:

- this is good for your back
- your tummy will not feel as sore.



Whether breast or bottle feeding, pillows will help to raise your baby up, and will protect your stitches.

Lying down



Plenty of rest is essential.

When lying on your back you may find it more comfortable with a pillow under your thighs.

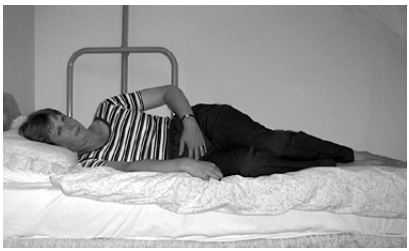
When lying on your side try using pillows for support.

This may also be a comfortable position for feeding.

Getting into and out of bed

- Use one hand to support your wound if necessary.
- Progress slowly to a standing position.
- Stand tall.
- Walk tall.

A good posture is essential. You will be more comfortable and it will help to protect your back.





To get into bed, reverse this process.

Breathing exercises that will help you

Whilst you are inactive it's important to use your lungs well, especially if you have had an anaesthetic.

It will help to keep your lungs clear of infection and help open the lower part of your lungs, which may have been restricted while you were pregnant.

1. Take a deep slow breath in through your nose.
2. Hold for a count of two.
3. Sigh the air out.

Repeat this three times, and do these exercises regularly until you are up and about.

Coughing, sneezing, laughing

The position in this picture will help ease any discomfort, supporting your wound with both hands may be sufficient.



If you feel the need to cough, the least painful and most effective way is to 'huff' (a short forced breath out through your mouth, like steaming up a mirror).

Remember:

- listen to your body
- stop if it hurts
- stop when tired
- never exercise if feeling unwell
- continue these exercises when you return home.

Circulation

Briskly circle or bend and stretch your ankles for 20 to 30 seconds.

- start straight after the birth of your baby
- do them as often as possible
- continue until you are up and about.

These exercises will:

- encourage the circulation in your legs; there is a greater risk of blood clots after having a baby
- lessen any puffiness or swelling around your ankles.

If you have varicose veins, it's important not to cross your legs.
This can block the flow of blood in your veins and make the swelling worse.

If your legs are very swollen and painful, you may need to wear support stockings for a time.

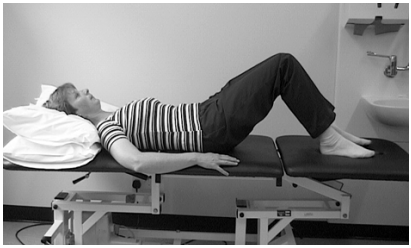
Deep abdominal exercise

Lie on your side or on your back with knees bent, let your tummy relax. Breathe in. As you breathe out, gently pull your lower abdomen in towards your spine. Hold for a few seconds, breathing normally. Your back and pelvis should not move. Repeat 5 times.

Pelvic tilt

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the bed or floor and your head supported on a small pillow.

1. Pull in your tummy.
2. Press the small of your back down into the bed.
3. Hold that position for a few seconds, but don't hold your breath.
4. Let go gently.



Repeat several times.

Knee rolling





1. Lie on your back with your knees bent and together.
2. Keep your shoulders firmly on the bed and **your stomach pulled in.**
3. Keeping feet and knees together, slowly roll your knees towards the bed as far as is comfortable.
2. Roll back to the middle, rest and repeat to the other side.

Eventually, your knees should touch each side of the bed.

Repeat these exercises 5 times each to start with, then gradually increase the number of times over the next week. Continue your exercises for 6 weeks after your baby is born.

Pelvic floor

The pelvic floor is made up of muscles which support your abdominal contents and control your front and back passages.

Imagine that you are trying to stop yourself passing wind, and at the same time trying to stop your flow of urine mid-stream. The feeling is one of 'squeeze and lift', closing and drawing up the back and front passages.

1. Hold the lift for as long as you can.
2. Release.
3. Rest (approx 4 seconds).
4. Repeat as many times as you can.
5. Now do up to ten short, sharp contractions.

It is important to do this without tightening your tummy or buttocks, squeezing your legs together or holding your breath!

In other words, only pelvic floor muscles should be working.

Do this exercise as often as you can anytime, anywhere, in any position.
Repeat 2 or 3 times a day for the rest of your life!

When you go home:

- put a pillow between yourself and the seat belt. This may be more comfortable
- expect to feel tired
- take plenty of rest.

Driving

When you start driving again will depend upon how well you recover.

1. Check with your insurance company that you are covered.
2. Make sure you can concentrate.
3. Can you do an emergency stop?

4. Start gradually.
5. Are you comfortable wearing a seat belt?
6. Can you twist in order to reverse safely?

Sexual relations

- Only when you feel ready.
- You may feel a temporary lack of interest, but this is normal.
- Remember to use a contraceptive!

Sport

Avoid strong abdominal exercises and competitive sport for 3 months. If your:

- wound is healed
- pelvic floor is strong
- six week post-natal check is clear

you can return to sporting activities.

If you need to lift...

Make sure your legs take the strain and not your back.

Before you lift:

1. Bend your knees.
2. Keep your back straight.
3. Pull in your tummy and your pelvic floor.

Try to avoid lifting heavy weights, for example the pram or a toddler, for 2 or 3 months.



If you have any queries, please contact your obstetric physiotherapist.

Your obstetric physiotherapist is:

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01872 252601 or 252885

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690

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