

## General Post-natal advice

In the first 6 weeks post-delivery it is recommended:

- **Rest** as much as you can – every time your baby goes down for a sleep, take a rest, recline, sleep or simply get off your feet with a book
- **Maintain fluids** – if breast feeding, drink at least 3 to 5 litres of fluid a day. Fluids can be found in soups, vegetables, fruits, and water. Limit or avoid tea, coffee and carbonated drinks, as they may irritate the bladder causing fluids to be removed from the body system. If breast feeding - your baby may consume in excess of 2 litres of fluid a day from your supply, YOU need to maintain a minimum of 1.6 litres in excess of this for your own basic body's long-term good health
- **Exercise** – low impact exercises such as walking, light swimming or water walking only (if no open wounds from delivery), gentle stretches or specifically designed postnatal yoga. It is recommended you start with 20 minutes of low cardiovascular exercise and build up slowly based on your fitness levels, to a recommended 45 – 60 minutes of activity a day or minimal three times a week
- **Avoid high impact exercise** such as running, skipping, bouncing, tennis, hockey as they may strain your pelvic floor muscles and stress your ligaments. Avoid breathe holding at all times. Breathe!
- **Support your back** - lifting, carrying, bathing baby's and breast feeding may load up your back muscles. When sitting / feeding, position yourself with a pillow behind the lumbar spine and if needed, wear a light weight back support in the day time. Be mindful of maintaining good posture when lifting, feeding, bathing and carrying your baby.
- **Take care of your wrists and thumbs** - Relax your shoulders, keep your wrists in a neutral position and thumbs relaxed. Often mums have their wrists in an extended position and thumbs outwards away from their palms. Over time this may cause a strain, pain and eventual loss of function at these joints. Check your wrist and hand position while bottle and or breast feeding, while supporting of your baby's head while bathing, latching, lifting up your baby. Doing this many times a day may eventually cause discomfort if your wrists and thumbs if they aren't in a good position or unsupported.
- **Pelvic Floor Muscle Exercises (PFMs) provided** there is no medical reason why you cannot start PFMs, do so as soon as you feel comfortable. It is recommended that you aim for 30 of both fast (2 second lift / 2 second rest) and slow contractions (10 second lift / 10 second rest) on a daily basis to build muscle strength. Do not try to do x 30 of either fast or slow PFM in one session, as this may cause you pain or dysfunction. Start with a few of each (say 5 x repetitions) several times a day and build up slowly.
- Always seek advice from your Women's Health Physiotherapist before beginning any exercise program.

“Enjoy the adventure of being a new mum!”