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:**


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](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)

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