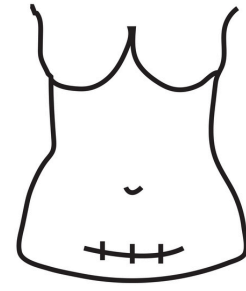


C-SECTION CARE HANDOUT

HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR CESAREAN SCAR



FOR THE FIRST 4 WEEKS:

- Keep your cut clean.
- Wear loose clothes.
- Gently touch around the scar.
- Get comfortable with your new scar: Look at it, touch it gently.
- Take deep breaths to help move your abdominal and scar with your breathing.

AT 4-6 WEEKS:

- Start gently touching the scar: It may feel sensitive to the touch but should not hurt.
- Continue to take deep abdominal breaths.
- Use light circular movements: Touch around and on the scar.

AT 6-10 WEEKS:

- Press a little firmer when touching the scar.
- Continue circular movements: Place a flat hand below the scar, press in and up, holding for 10-20 seconds. Repeat with the hand above pressing down.

AT 10-12 WEEKS:

- The scar should be stronger, so press more firmly and move the scar in all directions: Up, down, side to side, and diagonally.
- For direct scar release technique, apply a stretch in the direction where you feel restriction for 60-120 seconds.
- Use your thumb and fingers: With your thumb above the scar and fingers below, pinch and pull the scar away from your body and wiggle your fingers.
- Touch the scar for 5-10 minutes, 1-3 times a day.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

- Use paper tape or silicone strips: Apply to your clean, dry scar after the scab falls off to help keep the scar flat
- Follow instructions on the tape package for more details.
- Talk to your doctor or dermatologist for further instructions.
- Full scar healing takes 3-12 months. Healing times are estimates. If you have any other medical conditions, healing can take longer. Talk to your doctor or midwife if you have questions.

HELPFUL TIPS FOR MOVING EARLY ON

- Avoid holding your breath: Breathe out when rolling, standing up, or sitting down, especially when lifting objects, including your newborn or older child.
- Use the log roll method when getting out of bed:
 - Bend your knees and roll to the side with your shoulders and knees together.
 - Push off the bed with your hands or elbows while you swing your legs off the bed.
- Wear silky clothes: They help you slide better in bed, on couches, or chairs.

SEXUAL HEALTH/CHANGES POST C-SECTION

- Changes in belly tissues and pelvic muscles may occur.
- Sexual function after childbirth can be affected in both vaginal and C-section births: If you have trouble, see a pelvic physical therapist.
- While breastfeeding you have lower levels of estrogen and androgen hormone, which can cause vaginal dryness.
- You may benefit from topical estrogen or vaginal creams. Ask your doctor or midwife if these are right for you.



APTA
Pelvic Health

**Pregnancy & Postpartum
Special Interest Group**

This handout was created by Yassi Zarbafian and Jenifer McLaughlin for the webinar "Managing Sexual Wellness After a C-Section" hosted by the Pregnancy & Postpartum SIG October 22, 2024. This handout is meant to provide general information, not specific medical advice. It is not intended to substitute for the judgment of a person's healthcare provider. For more info, visit www.aptapelvichealth.org/ptlocator

C-SECTION CARE HANDOUT

EXERCISES

AT 0-4 WEEKS:

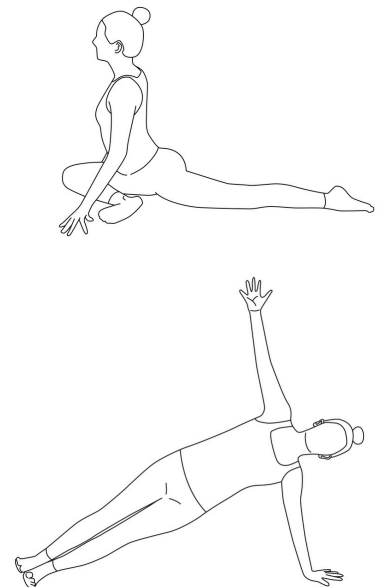
- **Supine ankle pumps** - While lying down on your back point and flex your feet, back and forth.
- **diaphragm breathing** - Take a breath in expanding your lower ribs and stomach then breathe out letting your stomach go back in.
- **gentle supine hip flexor stretch** - lying on the edge of the couch, bend your knee on your inside leg and let your outside leg touch the floor.

AT 4-8 WEEKS:

- **transverse abdominis activation** - breath out while pulling your lower abs towards your back like "you are putting on a tight pair of pants."
- **bent knee fall out** - Lying on your back with knees bent and pulling in your stomach to stay strong. Let one knee fall out to the side slowly then back in. Repeat on the other side.
- **posterior pelvic tilt supine** - Lying on your back with knees bent, push your back into the ground.

AT 8-12 WEEKS:

- **pigeon pose** - sitting on the ground with 1 leg crossed in front and the other leg pointing straight back.
- **supine marches** - lying on your back with knees bent, breath out and tighten your abs towards your back while lifting one knee up.
- **dead bug progressions** - Lying on your back bring your knees up while holding your abs tight and breathing if easy tap one foot down at a time. If still easy then add the opposite arm reaching overhead at the same time. If still easy, extend your foot straight out instead of bending it.
- **modified side plank** - Lie on your side with knees bent. Lift your body up on to your knees and elbows keeping your body straight with abs tight and breathing throughout.
- **bird dog progressions** - go on all fours with back in normal position and exhale while pulling abs in without aching back, if easy add lifting one arm out in front, if still easy kick one leg back and if still easy lift an arm while kicking leg back



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