

What we can do for you

- Our doctors can assess your wellbeing both physically and psychologically at this wonderful but sometimes challenging time
- We can provide support and advice for mothers in relation to feeding issues – both breast and formula
- We can assist with any postnatal problems such as bleeding, soreness, wound infections, mastitis, depression, constipation and haemorrhoids etc.
- Contraception if required will be provided, and the most suitable type for your needs can be selected by you after considering all your options
- If you are registered with the Combined Care Scheme your visit at 6 weeks postnatal is free of charge.
- Check ups for the baby at 2 weeks and 6 weeks postnatally are also free of charge under the Combined Care Scheme.

In the article below, written for EuMom, Dr. Mackey discusses some of the more common problems encountered around 6 weeks postnatally .

Health Issues For Newly Delivered Mums Return to sex life

This can seem a little daunting after delivery, especially if you have had an episiotomy or vaginal tear. These are usually completely healed 6 weeks after delivery. You should not experience pain during sex; if you are, you should consult your doctor as there may be a problem. Vaginal dryness can occur with breast feeding mums due to hormonal changes; a simple water-based lubricant will easily sort this out.

Contraception

You are probably beginning to think about contraceptive choices around this time; here is a brief summary of the many options available to you.

Breastfeeding mums

Options are more limited for breast feeding mums:
Condoms, the progesterone-only pill, Mirena coil and diaphragm are options available to breastfeeding mums; breastfeeding provides some contraception but should not be solely relied on; if you are supplementing breastfeeding at all you must use some form of artificial contraception.

Bottle-feeding mums

There is a wider range of options for bottle – feeding mums

Combined contraception i.e. oestrogen and progesterone containing contraception which comes in various forms – oral, patch or vaginal ring; progesterone-only contraception in several forms-pill, depo injection or implant; also diaphragms, Mirena coil or condoms.

Smears

These are often deferred at the 6 week postnatal visit because of lingering changes to the cervix caused by pregnancy which can make the result difficult to interpret. These changes are gone by 3 months, and it is appropriate to have your smear done then. If this is normal the smear should be repeated in 3-5 years.

Pelvic floor exercises(PFE)

You may have noticed by now if you haven't been diligent about your exercises that you leak urine with coughing/sneezing/exercising vigorously. Your pelvic floor muscles are a little weak following pregnancy and delivery. These muscles are very important for control of urine, control of wind and faeces and help to increase sexual awareness for you and your partner. Here is how to strengthen them

- Release your vaginal muscles as if you are about to urinate
- Then, contract these muscles up and in
- Hold the position for 5 counts and breathe normally
- Release
- Repeat as many times as possible until your muscles begin to tire

You should aim to do these 2-3 times a day. You will certainly see big improvements within a few weeks of starting, so stick with it!

Exercise

Exercise is essential for new mums as it:

- Combats stress and tension
- Helps you to sleep better
- Release of endorphins gives you a natural high
- Tones and strengthens muscles
- Boosts energy
- Increases self-esteem
- Helps you lose the extra weight gained during pregnancy

A good starting point is 30 minutes of exercise three times a week; The key to postnatal exercise is to start off slow and steady; remember your body is still slowly recovering from pregnancy so be gentle with it at the start!

Fast walking pushing your pram or buggy can be just as good as any fat-burning program in your gym; you must ensure that your heart rate increases, you should be able to talk while exercising but you are breathing harder than normal.

Nutrition and post pregnancy weight loss

Good nutrition is vital in breastfeeding mums; your appetite has increased so how best to satisfy you hunger and produce good quality milk for your baby without piling on the pounds?.

The experts say the best way is to increase the complex carbohydrate portion in your diet; not only will this satisfy your hunger for longer periods but it will also aid post-pregnancy weight loss without sacrificing milk production

Examples of complex carbohydrates include:

- Vegetables – broccoli, cauliflower, peppers, butternut squash, beans
- Fruit – apples, berries, oranges, melons, peaches
- Whole grains such as whole wheat bread, brown rice and brown pasta

Among the most important nutrients you need while breastfeeding is calcium – a minimum of

1000mg per day. While dairy foods are a great source, you don't have to drink milk to make milk. To meet your calcium needs, you need 5 daily servings of any calcium-rich food, including low-fat yogurt and cheese, as well as non-dairy foods such as salmon, broccoli, sesame seeds and kale.