



Lochia (Postnatal Discharge)

Lochia is the term used to describe the discharges from the uterus in the postnatal period. In this handout you'll find an explanation of what would be considered normal and abnormal lochia.

Normal Lochia

- The first 1-3 days after birth the lochia are red in color, the amount can be more than a normal period. The lochia will gradually become less and the color changes to pink and brownish (day 4-10) and then becomes paler and creamy-brown in color. This pale, creamy color lochia (which might have some evidence of blood) may continue for 2-6 weeks.
- The lochia of a multip (a mom who has had a baby before) tend to be heavier than that of a primip (first time mother).
- Lochia after a cesarean section are often less than after a normal delivery.
- An increase in the amount of lochia lost may be seen when the mother becomes more active.
- Blood clots: there might be small blood clots in the lochia during the first 24 hours; this is no reason for concern, unless it continues or is accompanied by pain. Blood clots as large as a fist are quite common; these should be reported and if possible shown to the doctor or midwife. (They might check to see if it contains any parts of the placenta or membranes.)
- Odor: The odor of the lochia is like a normal period, it can be heavy, but it shouldn't be offensive.

Abnormal Lochia

- Heavy lochia: your maternity pad is soaked within half an hour to an hour.
- You continue to have blood clots in the lochia or it is accompanied by pain.
- The lochia has an offensive odor.
- Red lochia continues after 3-4 days and/or there is a recurrence of fresh bleeding. (Some increase of lochia after becoming more mobile is normal; heavy fresh bleeding is not.)

In order to prevent infection, it is important to maintain good hygiene: change your pad every 2-3 hours and wash the vulval area daily!

Please be aware that the information provided is intended solely for general educational and informational purposes only. It is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the advice of your physician for any questions you may have regarding your medical condition. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have received in this program.

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