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POSTPARTUM

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” - Benjamin Franklin

When it comes to having babies, this saying could not be more true.

You are probably wondering “why do I need physical therapy after having a baby?” There are many issues that your body can encounter after the delivery process, even up to 12-18 months later. Even if you are not having specific problems following the birth of your little one, it is important to be evaluated for the following reasons.

As you know your body is and has been different now than it was 9-10 months ago! Many changes take place during pregnancy and childbirth, no matter how you delivered (vaginal or cesarean). It may take some extra effort to get your body back to functioning normally, especially to prevent problems in the future.

When I say “normal,” I am referring to proper muscle and body function, not “being in shape” or “losing the baby weight,” although this is important as well. Below are some of the problems/symptoms associated with childbearing and child births. Keep in mind many of these things you may not be aware of right now. Instead, many women come to me later in life with bigger problems in the pelvic and abdominal area that could have been prevented. Physical Therapy can be started as early as 4-6 weeks following the birth of your baby and clearance from your doctor to do so. (Usually started after your postpartum exam.)

Vaginal and Cesarean Births

Weakened Pelvic Floor Muscles: This is the most common result of childbearing. If the muscles are not strengthened back to normal, leaking urine, stool, falling pelvic organs and vaginal pressure, and sexual dysfunction can result. These are the muscles that do “kegel” exercises, but most women who try these are unsuccessful at properly training these muscles on their own. The pelvic floor is a group of small muscles with many functions for our pelvis, which make them difficult to exercise on your own without appropriate training of a professional. Women's Health Physical Therapy will help you recover.

Tight Pelvic Floor Muscles: Muscle spasm can occur in pelvic floor muscles after pregnancy, which can result in pain with intercourse (dyspareunia), inability to have intercourse, difficulty emptying your bladder, urine retention (which can

cause to infection), and difficulty passing bowel movements. In most cases, skilled techniques and treatments are necessary to release this tension and normalize the pelvic muscles.

Scar Adhesions: Scarring occurs at the abdominal incision after cesarean birth, at the perineum (area between vagina and rectum) after a tear or cut (episiotomy) with vaginal births. If these scars heal improperly, pain, decreased sensation, decreased ability to have intercourse, and decreased ability to strengthen muscles can result. The physical therapist can show you special techniques that you and/or your partner can do to minimize or eliminate these symptoms during and after the healing process.

Weakened Abdominal Muscles and Rectus Diastasis: Many women want to know, “How do I get my tummy back after pregnancy?” Weak abdominals can lead to weak or tight pelvic floor muscles, making you more vulnerable to low back pain, decrease ability and regularity of bowel movements, decrease overall fitness and ability to return to exercise. Doing abdominal exercise on your own after the baby can easily do more damage than good, without specific training from a specialized physical therapist.

Some Facts:

During a vaginal delivery there is often either a tear of the perineum or an episiotomy. In both cases, often the superficial and deep transverse perineal muscles are also torn or cut.

- 64% residents (a practitioner four months away from becoming a medical Dr) never learned pelvic anatomy (out of 200)
- 28% had performed a complicated episiotomy without supervision

It is common during the postpartum period (especially if you're breastfeeding) for the vaginal tissues to be dry and more sensitive. Even if you've never needed lubrication before during intimacy you may need it now. A great one that I recommend is Slippery Stuff

Note:

Even if your children are older now or you have had multiple babies, YOU CAN STILL BENEFIT FROM THIS SERVICE!!