

UNIT 2: OBSTETRICS
SECTION A: NORMAL OBSTETRICS

Educational Topic 13: Postpartum Care

Rationale: Knowledge of normal postpartum events allows appropriate care, reassurance and early recognition of abnormal events.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

A student should be able to:

- Discuss the normal physiologic changes of the postpartum period
- Describe the components of normal postpartum care
- Outline topics to cover in postpartum patient counseling
- Describe appropriate postpartum contraception

TEACHING CASE

CASE: A 22 year-old multigravida delivered her third healthy child vaginally without complication. During sign-out and hand-off, the patient is described as ready for discharge from the hospital. She is breastfeeding, as she has with all of her children, but reports difficulty latching on. Although she is not married, she is in a stable relationship. She is considering permanent sterilization and wants to discuss it at her postpartum check-up. She states that she does not want any contraception at discharge, since she is breastfeeding and thinks she does not need any. On further questioning, she alludes to a vague history of a possible deep venous thrombosis (DVT) and history suggestive of postpartum depression after a prior pregnancy. Even though she is not a new mother, she asks about when she should expect her period.

COMPETENCY-BASED DISCUSSION & KEY TEACHING POINTS:

Competencies addressed:

- Patient Care
- Medical Knowledge
- Interpersonal and Communication Skills
- Systems based practice

1. What are you going to tell the patient about her difficulty with latching on?

2. How are you going to answer the patient's question about resumption of menses?

3. What type of contraceptive counseling are you going to provide?

4. How would your contraceptive counseling change if the patient had persistently elevated blood pressure?

5. How would contraception counseling change if the patient had gestational diabetes?

6. How are you going to include the history of potential postpartum depression in your management plan?

7. What discharge instructions are you going to give this patient?

REFERENCES

Beckman CRB, et al. *Obstetrics and Gynecology*. 7th ed. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins, 2013.

Hacker NF, Moore JG, et al. *Essentials of Obstetrics and Gynecology*. 5th ed. Philadelphia: Saunders, 2010.

CDC US Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr59e0528a1.htm

Update to CDC's *U.S. Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use, 2010* (updated in June 2012) : Revised Recommendations for the Use of Contraceptive Methods During the Postpartum Period
www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6026a3.htm