

Postpartum Recovery Support Garment White Paper

With both vaginal deliveries and cesarean sections (c-sections), the body transforms to support infant birth. However, once the delivery is complete, the body still has quite a bit of work to do. It must properly heal after the muscles and ligaments stretch to widen the vaginal canal.

With the help of expert maternity care and postpartum recovery garments, there are multiple ways to expedite post-pregnancy healing and recovery.

Common Effects Of Pregnancy

Diastasis Rectus

During pregnancy, the abdominal muscles separate as the uterus grows. This causes the linea alba, the connective tissue that runs down the middle of the muscles, to thin and widen. The separation of these muscles with diastasis recti makes it difficult for the two halves to work together like they are intended to do, which can lead to muscle weakness. Because these muscles are essential to core stability, this separated, weakened state can cause pain, discomfort, and instability that interferes with mom's ability to perform daily activities.

Pelvic Floor Weakening

The muscles and ligaments in the pelvis carry much of the increased load of a growing fetus. A strong pelvic floor is essential to supporting the abdominal organs during pregnancy, but these muscles must also be flexible since they must lengthen and stretch to allow the baby to pass through the birth canal during vaginal birth. The body was designed to do this without any issues, but sometimes the pelvic floor is not strong or flexible enough; so it can become strained during the pregnancy or delivery. In these cases, the muscles may not come back together properly after the pregnancy. This can lead to incontinence, prolapse, and discomfort.

Incontinence

Because the pelvic floor is responsible for holding the uterus, vagina, bowel, and bladder, once it stretches due to birth trauma, the inability to hold urine and stools may become an issue. This may cause incontinence; the lack of voluntary control over urination and defecation.

The two most common types of postpartum incontinence include:

Stress Incontinence: This occurs when physical movement such as coughing, running, sneezing, or lifting place pressure on the bladder, causing urine to leak.

Overactive Bladder (OAB): This type of urinary incontinence occurs when the bladder experiences uncontrollable spasms and the muscles responsible for holding urine become overwhelmed, allowing urine to leak.

Relaxin

Throughout pregnancy, and for several weeks postpartum, the body produces the hormone, Relaxin, to loosen your joints and ligaments to allow the body to fully stretch for giving birth. These ligaments take several weeks to tighten back to their usual state after delivery, and during this time the instability in the joints can lead to pain and discomfort.

Pelvic Pain

As pelvic ligaments relax in preparation for delivery, the usual stability of the pelvis is lost. This can lead to pain in the hips, groin, and back as well as putting the woman at an increased risk of falling.

Low Back Pain

When the sacroiliac (SI) joint, which connects the ilium to the sacrum, loosens to allow the hips to widen for childbirth, it can cause pain and discomfort in the low back, with some women reporting shooting pains down their legs. Occasionally, these symptoms of SI joint instability persist for many months or years postpartum.

Perineal Lacerations

As the body stretches to make way for the baby passing through, perineal lacerations, also known as tears, may occur in the soft tissues that separate the vagina from the anus. With a severe tear, mothers may experience pain, difficulties performing normal activities, and fecal urgency or incontinence.

Episiotomy

An episiotomy, also known as a perineotomy, is performed when a surgical incision is made by an obstetrician or midwife to the perineum and the posterior vaginal wall when it needs to be widened to allow the baby to pass through. Episiotomies can lead to pain, bruising, swelling, urinary incontinence or burning urination, and painful intercourse.

How A Cesarean Affects The Body

A cesarean is generally performed by making a horizontal incision just above the pubic bone, which is stapled or sutured closed after the delivery is complete. The abdominal muscles themselves are not cut during the delivery, but they are pulled apart to allow access to the uterus. Most mothers who deliver via cesarean section have the same pregnancy-related issues as those who have vaginal deliveries, but they also report additional complaints related to the surgical delivery, such as gas and constipation as a result of the medications used and the abdominal surgery.

Incision Site Pain

After delivery, the incision site may be sore, numb, hurt, burn or itch, all of which can cause discomfort. To promote healing, it is important to protect the wound from additional strain. Sneezing, coughing, lifting the baby, and exercising can cause increased intra-abdominal pressure at the incision site, which can cause it to hurt, burn, or take longer to heal.

As part of the surgical process, the blood and lymphatic vessels were cut to give access to the baby. While blood vessels quickly find alternate routes to continue circulation, the lymphatic vessels do not. These white blood cells may collect in the damaged tissues around the incision site, which can cause swelling, discomfort, pain, and bloating.

Compression Garments To Aide Postpartum Healing

Utilizing postpartum compression garments like the Motif postpartum compression garment will stabilize joints, to reduce pain and increases mobility to get moms back on their feet. The Motif postpartum compression garment is made of lightweight, breathable MicroNet fabric with a triple abdominal support panel for comfortable compression. The compression reduces swelling and postpartum bleeding while also giving external support to a cesarean scar. This assists with circulation and supports the recuperating body for better movement.

The garment has a zipper, so after a cesarean, the incision site will not be pulled at when putting it on. By providing gentle support, a postpartum compression garment can reduce bleeding, swelling, aches, and pains as well as increased stability and comfort for day to day activities with enhanced recovery. The split-crotch design makes it easy to use the restroom as the anatomical crotch panel supports and protects personal tears and episiotomy incisions.

By having a silicone leg gripper and shoulder straps, the Motif postpartum garment stays comfortably in place without riding up. Plus, it's made of lightweight materials to remain discreet under all types of clothing.

The Motif postpartum compression garment is FDA approved under the code Postpartum Recover Garments; Sec. 880.5160 Therapeutic medical binder, meaning they legally meet all of the FDA requirements as a medical device to assist with postpartum healing.

