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Program of Resources, Information and Support for Mothers



Incontinence

A topic that no one really talks about, but, up to one third of mothers have it at 3 months after birth.

What is Incontinence?

There are two types of incontinence - urinary and anal. They can be present at the same time or separately.

Urinary incontinence is a problem with controlling your urine. Women may experience leakage when they cough, laugh or sneeze, or when they are active, like when doing a star jump. Others find they need to go to the toilet more often or more quickly than before the birth.

Constipation is usually particularly painful just after the birth. A small number of women may have problems with leakage from the bowel, having no warning or not being able to hold on. Anal incontinence can also be a problem with not being able to hold back wind or motions.

Why is it so Difficult to Talk about Incontinence?

Women don't report or talk about their incontinence to doctors or nurses, for a variety of reasons:

- ◆ *Embarrassment, especially if it hasn't been talked about early on*
- ◆ *Perception that it's normal and "nothing can be done about it"*
- ◆ *Guilt for not doing pelvic floor exercises*
- ◆ *Too busy with the baby to find the time to do something about it*

Strategies for Dealing with Urinary & Anal Incontinence

Mention it. Talk about it to your doctor or health nurse.

There are a range of strategies that may alleviate the symptoms of urinary and anal incontinence.

Many therapies exist, but they're not for everyone so, ask for more information.

