

PERINATAL
PHYSIOTHERAPY



PERINATAL PHYSIOTHERAPY

Guide for your return home

MATERNITY WARD

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INTRODUCTION

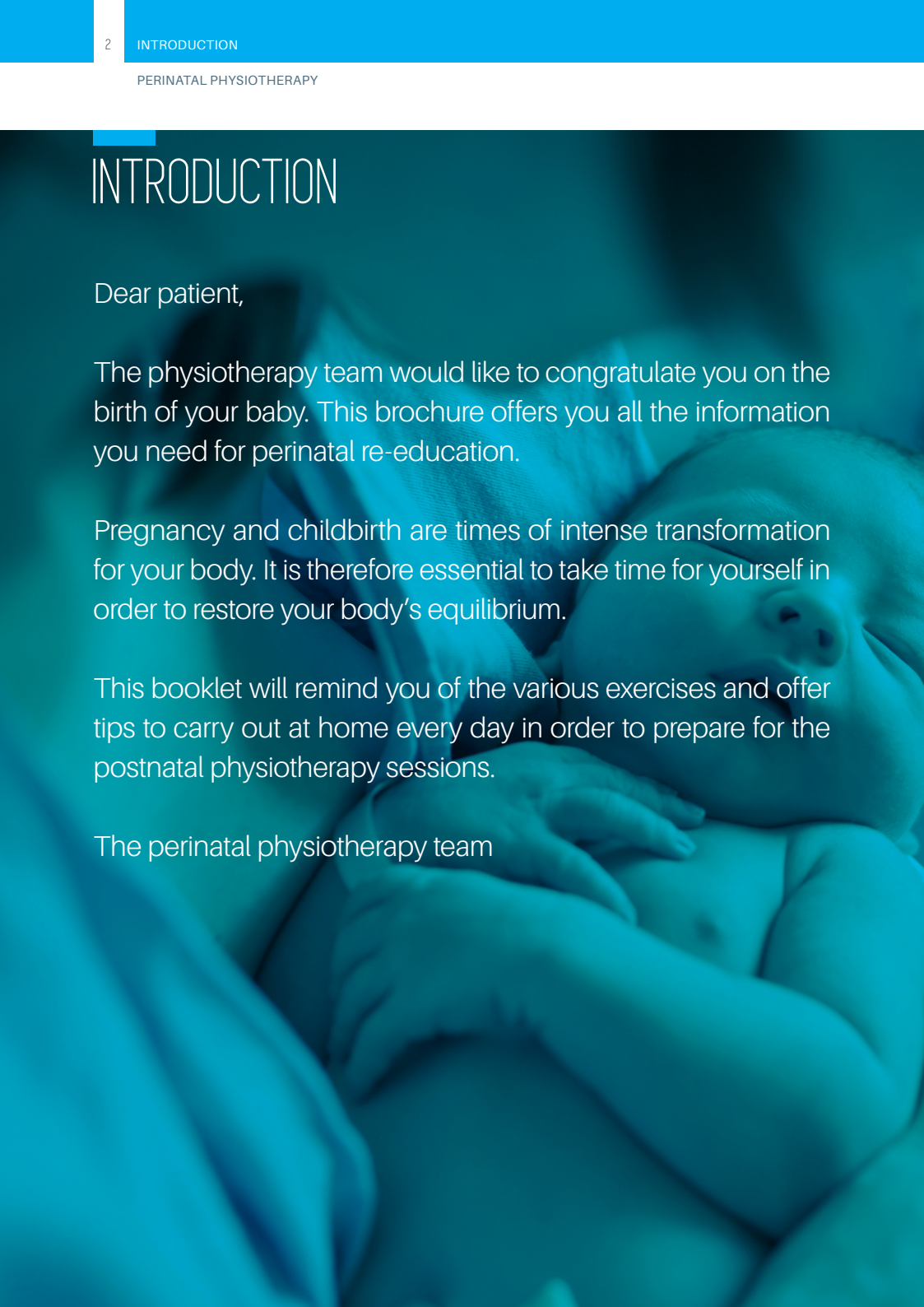
Dear patient,

The physiotherapy team would like to congratulate you on the birth of your baby. This brochure offers you all the information you need for perinatal re-education.

Pregnancy and childbirth are times of intense transformation for your body. It is therefore essential to take time for yourself in order to restore your body's equilibrium.

This booklet will remind you of the various exercises and offer tips to carry out at home every day in order to prepare for the postnatal physiotherapy sessions.

The perinatal physiotherapy team



TIPS

- Avoid using your abdominal muscles to sit up after lying down and vice versa; instead, 'roll over' on your side
- Avoid carrying heavy loads (max. 5 kg)
E.g.: Maxi-cosi on the stroller
- Don't resume too intense sport (jogging, jumping, etc.)
- To protect your perineum, contract it before undertaking any physical effort (carrying things, coughing, laughing, etc.)
- Assume a correct and comfortable position to nurse your baby: relax your shoulders, place your arms on the nursing cushion and your feet on the footstool
- Adopt the correct position when making a bowel movement (to prevent haemorrhoids and pressure on the perineum):
 - Elevate your feet (placing them on the footstool)
 - Lean forward with your back nice and straight, and place your elbows on your knees
 - Don't push, but breathe into your hand
- Make sure to maintain good personal hygiene:
 - Eat fibre-rich food
 - Drink enough water (more if breastfeeding)
 - Get exercise every day (e.g. walking)
- If you have had a Caesarean, hold the stitching firmly with your hands when undertaking any physical effort (coughing, laughing, sneezing, etc.)
- For the next 6 weeks:
 - No "violent" sports, but engage in walking and do your hypopressive exercises
 - No baths or swimming pool
 - No sexual relations
 - No tampon

PHYSIO: WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

During your pregnancy and childbirth, two muscle groups were particularly under strain: the perineum and the abdominal muscles.

PERINEUM

The exercises for this muscle group are intended to restore their tone and thus prevent problems of incontinence and descent of your organs.

→ Exercises:

1° Contract and hold the perineum for 10 seconds

2° Contract and relax the perineum for 1 second

Repeat series of 5 → 3x/day

ABDOMINAL MUSCLES

Your upper abdominal muscles look like two vertical strips side by side. During your pregnancy, their shape changed: to allow your baby to grow and to make room for your belly to expand, the connective tissues have thinned in a process known as 'diastasis'. Therefore they are currently no longer able to adequately fulfil their role of abdominal straps and protection for your back.

Hypopressive exercises are intended to avoid any increase in pressure around the abdominal area and are essential for postnatal re-education.

EXERCICES

HYPOPRESSIVE ABDOMINAL GYMNASTICS

These exercises should be done at least once a day during the next 6 and are to be included gradually in your daily activities.

→ Frequency:

Weeks 1 & 2: 2 x each position

Week 3: 3 x each position

Week 4: 4 x each position

Week 5: 5 x each position

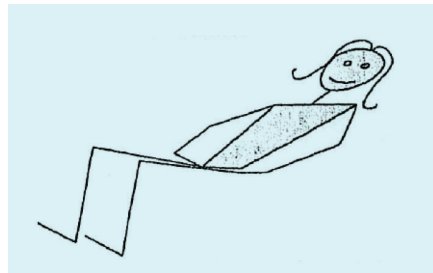
Week 6: 6 x each position

→ During each exercise, you should first:

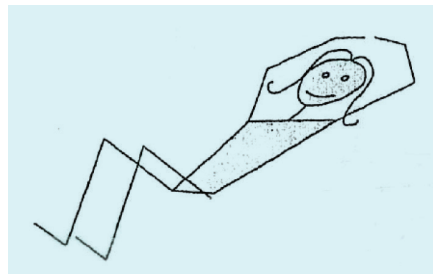
- stretch,
- breathe in,
- breathe out all the air,
- suck in your stomach under your ribs by opening up your thorax and pushing your elbows outwards,
- maintain this position for 10-15 seconds.

→ Positions:

1. Lying on your back with hands at hip level – elbows bent 90 degrees – feet flexed upward – knees bent 45 degrees



2. Lying on your back – hands above your head – elbows bent 90 degrees – feet flexed upward – knees bent 90 degrees



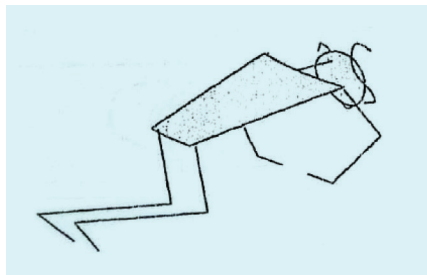
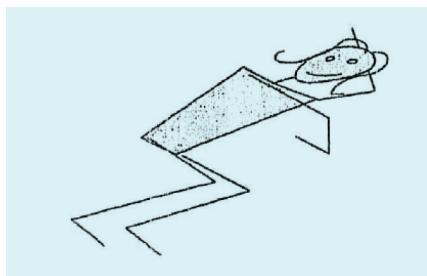
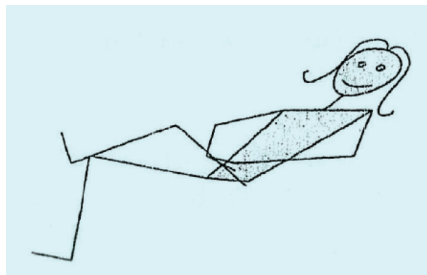
3. Lying on your back - left heel placed on right knee - both hands on the left thigh - elbows bent 90 degrees

4. Repeat same position on your other side

5. Lying on your left side - left arm under your head - right arm placed on the chest with elbow bent 90 degrees- knees bent 90 degrees

6. Repeat same position on your other side

7. On your hands and knees
- hands facing each other -
elbows bent 90 degrees - head relaxed - chin pulled down on the sternum



8. Sitting with your head upright - hands at hip level
- elbows bent 90 degrees
- feet flat on the floor

9. Standing with your head upright - hands at hip level
- elbows bent 90 degrees
- knees bent 30 degrees - pelvis tilted forward

POSTNATAL RE-EDUCATION

(Start 6 weeks after childbirth)

TESTING THE PERINEUM

Individual session during which we will assess the strength and endurance of your perineal muscles.

GROUP OR INDIVIDUAL CLASSES

These classes are offered by physiotherapists specialized in uro-gynaecology, and are to begin 6 weeks after delivery. They are all offered in group or individual sessions in some cases, to which your babies are most welcome.

→ Please wear sports clothing and bring a towel.

TESTING THE PERINEUM & POSTNATAL RE-EDUCATION

St-Elisabeth site

For an appointment → ☎ **02 614 27 30**

On the day of the appointment, please report to registration and then follow path 100 to level 0 (room 1).

Group lessons: Tuesday and Thursday from 12am to 1pm on level +1 at Schuman's hall

St-Michel site

For an appointment → ☎ **02 614 37 60**

On the day of the appointment, please report to registration and then follow the green arrows to level -1 (physical medicine).

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The Europe Hospitals are a leading hospital group serving Brussels and the surrounding area. As a multilingual general hospital, we offer comprehensive care at our four sites: St-Elisabeth in Uccle, St-Michel in Etterbeek/European district, the Bella Vita Medical Center in Waterloo and the External consultation in Halle.

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www.europehospitals.be

St-Elisabeth site

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 02 614 20 00

St-Michel site

Rue de Linthoutstraat 150 - 1040 Brussels

 02 614 30 00

Bella Vita Medical Center

Allée André Delvaux 16 - 1410 Waterloo

 02 614 42 00

External Consultation Halle

Bergensesteenweg 67 - 1500 Halle

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