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Title

Peripartum Return to Activity

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Background: Research demonstrates many benefits of exercise for pregnant and postpartum women. Many physicians are unaware of evidence-based exercise recommendations for these patients, leading to inconsistent counseling.

Objective: To improve provider education and patient counseling on physical activity in the prenatal and postpartum periods.

Methods: Providers completed a pre-intervention survey on baseline knowledge and confidence counseling peripartum patients on physical activity. Educational sessions on specific recommendations were delivered at department meetings. A post-intervention survey re-assessed provider knowledge and confidence.

Results: Among 50 pre-intervention respondents, 58% and 42% provided activity counseling to prenatal and postpartum patients, respectively. The primary barrier to providing counseling was lack of written resources. The most requested resource formats were smart phrases (76%) and handouts/PDFs (56%). After intervention (n=9), postpartum counseling increased (42% to 89%, $p=0.0336$), and provider confidence improved (2.8 to 3.6 on a 5-point scale, $p=0.005$). Prenatal counseling confidence increased but was not statistically significant.

Conclusions: Lack of educational materials is a key barrier to providing updated, evidence-based physical activity counseling to peripartum patients. Standardized resources significantly increase provider confidence and frequency of postpartum physical activity counseling.