

# POSTPARTUM SONOGRAPHY

## *THE PUERPERIUM*

The puerperium is the period after delivery that begins with the expulsion of the placenta and ends when maternal anatomy and physiology return to a normal "non-pregnant" state. Indications for sonographic examination during this period include attempts to identify:

- retained products of conception
- postpartum hemorrhage
- post-surgical hematomas
- abscesses
- ovarian vein thrombosis

## *NORMAL ANATOMY*

The uterus may assume a variety of positions following either vaginal or cesarean delivery. Typically it remains large and boggy for the first week after which it quickly reduces in size. It should return to normal size within 6 weeks after delivery. **Uterine involution** is the process by which the uterus returns to its normal size.

### SONOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

- large, hypoechoic uterus
- fluid identified within the endometrial cavity representing residual blood
- varying shape and position
- internal os may be open

#### Rule of Thumb:

Size of postpartum uterus = 14 x 7 x 7cm

AP endometrial thickness

Normal sonographic appearance in a non-involuting, postpartum uterus

