

San Maternity

Postnatal Perineal Care

Patient Information Handout

Updated Jun 2023

Many women who have a vaginal birth will experience some degree of trauma to the perineum, the area between the vagina and the anus. ⁽¹⁾ Your Obstetrician will explain if trauma has occurred and repair it appropriately.

In the first few days after birth it is essential to manage and care for the perineum to decrease pain, prevent infection and promote healing. ⁽¹⁾

During your stay in hospital your obstetrician and midwife may ask you about your perineal pain and may inspect it to monitor healing or risk of infection.

Hygiene

To prevent infection and promote healing, keep the perineum clean and dry:

- Change sanitary pads every 3-4 hours and wash hands before and after
- Lean forward when passing urine to prevent stinging ⁽²⁾
- If you experience stinging and excessive discomfort when passing urine even when leaning forward, a urinary alkalizer such as URAL can be given to you by your midwife to reduce the acidity and decrease the burning sensation ⁽⁴⁾
- Wipe front to back, washing the area with warm water after passing urine or bowel movements and patting area dry ⁽²⁾

Ice

Use ice pads to perineum for the first 24-72 hours, to reduce pain, swelling and aid in healing. These should be applied to perineum for 20-minute intervals every 2 hours. ⁽²⁾

Pelvic Floor Exercises

Pelvic floor exercises are encouraged from 24 hours after birth to strengthen the muscles. ⁽²⁾ Ask your midwife if unsure of how to do pelvic floor exercises.

Pain Relief

Oral pain relief such as Paracetamol (Panadol) and Diclofenac (Voltaren) are usually the first line of defence. Your obstetrician will prescribe what they prefer you to have, and your midwife will administer it. ⁽²⁾

Avoid prolonged sitting as it may place a lot of pressure on the perineum and delay healing. ⁽⁴⁾

Support

Your obstetrician and midwife are here to support you holistically so do not hesitate to ask any questions.

Once you have left hospital and you have concerns, contact your obstetrician or GP. ⁽⁴⁾

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HIPPS – An easy way to remember ⁽³⁾

- H – Hygiene
- I – Ice
- P – Pelvic floor exercises
- P – Pain relief
- S – Support

Diet

- Eat a diet that is nutritious and balanced with high fibre to avoid constipation. Straining while trying to do a bowel movement can delay healing process.
- Drink plenty of water. ⁽²⁾
- Support the perineum with a folded bunch of toilet paper, allowing you to push a small amount to open your bowels. DO NOT STRAIN. ⁽⁴⁾

References

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