



Perineal Massage

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Massaging the perineum (the area between the vagina and anus) at the end of pregnancy can help you prepare the muscles for the sensations of stretch and pressure during birth.

Why should I do it?

Studies have found that perineal massage can reduce the risk of tearing in first time mothers.

When should I start?

Perineal massage should ideally begin from the 34th week of pregnancy. Do not massage if you have any active infection.

What do I need?

- Clean hands
- An empty bladder
- Lubricant or oil such as Olive & Bee, coconut, olive or vegetable oil
- You can do this with a mirror by yourself or get your partner to help.
- A warm bath or warm compresses on the perineum for 10 minutes prior to the massage may help with relaxation.

How do I do it?

- Use pillows to set up in a comfortable semi-reclined position.
- Using some lubricant/oil place your thumbs around 3-4cm into the vagina.
- Press downwards towards the anus. Whilst maintaining the down pressure separate your fingers/thumbs to stretch the perineum downwards and outwards. You may also attempt to move both thumbs from side to side in 'U' Shape.
- You may feel a slight burning, tingling or stinging sensation.
- Continue for 1-3 minutes then release.
- Massage with more oil over the lower half of the vagina (6 O'clock area) then repeat downward stretch again.
- Consciously try to relax your pelvic floor muscles as you massage
- As you practice the massage the tissues will relax and stretch.
- The massage may cause the area to become a little numb.
- The massage should not be painful
- Be careful to avoid the urinary opening.

Perineal Massage continued

Partner assisted massage

If your partner is helping you or performing the massage for you, they need to use clean hands and one or two index fingers inside the lower part of the vagina. It is important to tell your partner how much pressure to apply without causing pain.

When you should NOT do it?

You should not perform perineal massage in any of the following situations:

- prior to 34 weeks of pregnancy.
- if you have placenta praevia (a low-lying placenta) or any other condition where there is bleeding from the vagina during the second half of pregnancy.
- if you are suffering from vaginal herpes, thrush or any other vaginal infection, as massage could spread the infection and worsen the condition.

