

Perineal Massage

What is perineal massage?

Perineal massage is a technique used to increase the possibility of delivering a baby without an episiotomy or tear. It stretches the perineal tissues, resulting in less resistance in the birth of the baby, and less need to cut into the tissue to make room for delivery. If the muscles of the pelvic floor are relaxed there will be less resistance. Doing perineal massage helps a woman identify those muscles and learn to relax them in response to pressure.

What are the benefits?

- Stretches the vaginal tissues, muscles surrounding the vagina, and the skin of the perineum.
- Research shows a decreased chance of an episiotomy or tear.
- Familiarizes the woman with stretching sensations; which helps her relax and release as baby is crowning.
- Lessens anxiety and increases confidence as baby is crowning.

Do not perform perineal massage if...

- You have a urinary tract infection.
- You have active genital herpes, or other sexually transmitted disease.
- If your caregiver advises against it because of health concerns.

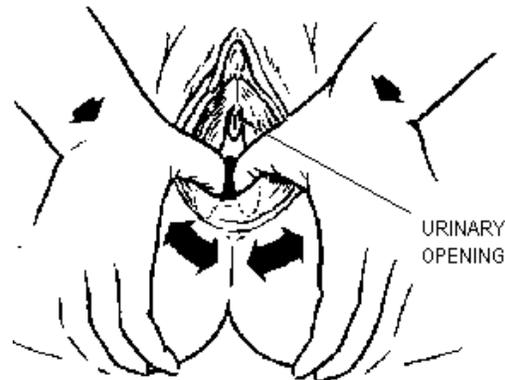
When do I start?

Begin about six weeks before your due date.

How is it done?

By the mother to be:

1. Wash your hands.
2. Either stand with one foot on a step stool or lie in a semi-sitting position.
3. Dip your thumbs in vitamin E oil, vegetable oil, or K-Y Jelly.
4. Use a mirror the first few times to see what you are doing.
5. Put thumbs as deep as you comfortably can inside vagina toward perineum.
6. Rub in a downward U shape back and forth, increasing the pressure slowly, massaging the side of the vaginal walls and down toward the perineum. Do not rub upward toward the urethra. Massage for 5-10 minutes.
7. Concentrate on relaxing the muscles as you massage.
8. As you become more comfortable with the massage, increase the pressure until the perineum just begins to sting from the tension you apply. You will later recognize this stinging sensation as the baby's head is being born and your perineum will stretch around it.



At first you will feel tight but in time and with practice the tissue will begin to relax. Remember to be gentle, do not press hard enough to cause bruising or swelling. If you have any questions after trying the massage, please contact your caregiver or childbirth instructor.

By the partner:

1. Partner washes hands.
2. Mother to be lays comfortably back in a semi-sitting position.
3. Partner dips index fingers into vitamin E oil, vegetable oil or K-Y Jelly.
4. Partner inserts fingers up to their second knuckle into the vagina toward the perineum.
5. Partner rubs in a downward U shape back and forth, increasing the pressure slowly, massaging the side of the vaginal walls and down toward the perineum. Do not rub upward toward the urethra. Massage for 5-10 minutes.
6. Mother to be concentrates on relaxing the muscles as she receives the massage.
7. As the mother to be becomes more comfortable with the massage, increase the pressure until the perineum just begins to sting from the tension you apply.

At first she will feel tight but in time and with practice her tissues will begin to relax. Remember to be gentle, do not press hard enough to cause bruising or swelling. If you have any questions after trying the massage, please contact your caregiver or childbirth instructor.