

Perineal massage

What is perineal Massage

Perineal massage is a method of preparing the outlet of the vagina for the stretching and pressure sensations during the birth of your baby.

When you should avoid perineal massage

- Prior 34 weeks of pregnancy
- If you have any vaginal herpes, thrush or any other vaginal infection
- Severe blood pressure problems in pregnancy
- Concerns regarding the growth of your baby
- If you have any cervical shortening (also known as incompetent cervix)
- Placenta praevia (low lying placenta) or any other conditions where there is bleeding from the vagina

Benefits of perineal massage

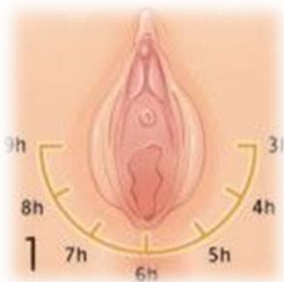
- Perineal massage helps your 'mind-body' connection, helping you to be more aware of the area for when in labour
- It may help to lower the risk of tearing (vagina to anus) that required stitches or episiotomy (surgical cut to the perineum) for first time moms.
- Women tend not to report the extremes of stinging and burning that often accompany the birth of their baby's head
- Perineal massage can decrease the chance of ongoing perineum pain at three months post-delivery.

How to perform perineal massage

- 2-3 times a week from 35 weeks of pregnancy
- Bath or warm compresses on the perineum prior perineal massage can help to relax the area.
- Empty your bladder if you need to pass urine, wash your hands and find a relaxing comfortable position (in the bath relaxing legs to either side of the bath, bed, legs supports with pillows)
- Using a mirror can help you become familiar with the vaginal opening
- You or your partner can carry out the perineal massage. * your partner will need to have clean hands and gently insert one index finger into the lower part of the vagina, you must tell your partner how much pressure to apply.

Technique

- Apply, a water-soluble lubricant or natural oil (olive oil) on one or both of your thumb
- Place one thumb just inside the vagina entrance, working from nine down to six and up to three, thinking of a clock face. Avoid pressing on the top part of the vagina.



- Gently press down, hold and relax with the pressure, slowly move from 9 to 3 to gently stretch the vagina opening



- You can experience a strong stretching burning sensation the first few times, this should ease over time
- Perineal massage can be done for up to 10 mins, daily