



Perineal Care after birth... What you should know

➤ PERINEAL HYGIENE

- Change sanitary pads frequently
- Wash the perineum at least 3 times daily

➤ IF YOU HAVE A TEAR OR AN EPISIOTOMY

- **To prevent infection**
 - * Keep the perineum clean and dry
 - * Change sanitary pads frequently
 - * Wash the perineum at least 3 times daily with shower hose.
At home, try a sitz bath or salt bath if you wish
 - * Pat the perineal area dry with clean towel.
 - * Do not put any cream on the stitches (unless Doctor advises)
 - * Taking antibiotics (*only* if Doctor advises)
- **To reduce the pain & swelling**
 - * Using an ice pack within the first 24 hours after giving birth is a current practice in the postnatal ward, based on verbal feedback from midwives & patients (wrap the ice pack in a clean cloth and place it over the stitches, then wear the sanitary pad and underwear)
 - * Taking analgesics such as Paracetamol (as staff advises)
- **To prevent constipation**
 - * Increase fibre in diet (Eat lots of fruit and vegetables)
 - * Increase oral fluid intake (recommended 8 glasses daily)
 - * Try not to strain during bowel action
 - * Take a stool softener such as Fibogel if feel like straining
 - * Use laxative (as Medical staff advises)
 - * Practise pelvic floor exercise regularly
- **Before leaving hospital**
 - * Ensure bowels have opened
 - * Discuss any concerns and make sure all questions have been answered.
 - * Check if there are any special follow-up appointments
- **After leaving hospital**
 - * Ring Family Doctor or Community Nurse for any concerns
 - * See Family Doctor or come to the Hospital A&E if:
 - * Vaginal discharge gets heavier or develops a bad smell
 - * Have a high temperature
 - * Have an excess pain
 - * Come to all follow-up appointments

References: *Postpartum Perineal Care* (www.healthsquare.com) or (www.gentlebirth.org)

NSW Health- Better Health-Good Health Care (2001), *Pregnancy Care* (www.health.nsw.gov.au)

H. Spiby (2002), *Incorporating Evidence into Practice to Improve Perineal Care* (www.fons.org)

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