



Perineal care after having your baby



Good perineal care can help reduce pain and the risk of infection.

Pain management

- Apply cold packs for 10 - 20 minutes for the first 1 - 3 days, as needed.
- Take pain relief medication such as paracetamol or ibuprofen, as needed.

Hygiene and healing

- Regularly inspect your perineal injury by lying on your back, separating your labia and use a hand held mirror to look for signs of infection (increased swelling, yellow or green discharge, separation of sutures).
- Try to support the perineal wound when coughing and passing a bowel motion (avoid straining).
- Wash and pat dry your perineal area after using the toilet.
- Change your perineal pad frequently.

Pelvic floor muscle exercises

- Begin exercises 2 - 3 days after you have your baby, or when you feel comfortable.
- If you have had 3rd or 4th degree tears you will need a consultation with a physiotherapist and a specialist doctor at 4 - 6 weeks after you have your baby.

Positioning and movement

To reduce swelling and bruising in the first 48 hours you should:

- lie on your side when resting and breastfeeding
- lift your body when repositioning rather than dragging
- place a pillow between your thighs when lying on your side
- avoid sitting in the same position for too long
- avoid lifting heavy objects or straining
- not do any high impact exercise or sit-ups for 6 - 12 weeks after you have your baby.

Diet

- A healthy diet high in fibre will help to avoid constipation.
- Drink a minimum of 2 litres of water a day.

Lifestyle

- Sexual activity can begin when you feel comfortable. A water based lubricant should be used.
- Avoid swimming until your bleeding has stopped and your sutures have healed.

Contact Information

If you have any concerns, please contact the Postnatal Ward on 4734 2311 or your GP.