

Postpartum Healing

CARING FOR A PERINEAL TEAR OR EPISIOTOMY



What to Expect

The perineum is the area between the vulva and the anus where a tear or episiotomy may occur during birth.

- Pain and discomfort usually peak within the first few days and then begin to improve.
- Sitting, walking, urinating and bowel movements are typically affected for one week.
- It typically takes 4-6 weeks to be fully healed.
- Everyone recovers at a different pace.

Daily Care

- Walk each day starting with 10 minutes and gradually increasing the time each day (prevents constipation and helps with recovery).
- Rest when tired to aid the recovery process.
- Eat as usual, increase fibre in diet and drink lots of fluids (prevents constipation and straining with bowel movements).
- During the first bowel movements take your time, focus on breath, control your pushing, and support the perineum by applying gentle pressure to the area with a warm washcloth.
- Pat incision dry after showering/bathing, air drying is also okay.
- Take pain medication as instructed by you health care provider.



Ask your primary health care provider about when you can...

- lift anything heavier than your baby
- drive
- use tampons or douche
- have sex
- return to strenuous activity



Wound Care

- Apply an ice pack on the painful areas for 10-20 minutes every 2-3 hours (use a thin cloth between the ice and your skin).
- Sit in 8-10 cm of warm water (*see sitz bath recipe links below) for 15-20 mins, 3x a day and after bowel movements. Air dry or use a hair dryer.
- Keep the area clean with warm water from a peri bottle or cup after using the toilet. Pat dry with a clean towel.
- Use baby wipes or medicated pads instead of toilet paper.



When to Seek Help

- If you are experiencing:
 - dizziness/light headedness
 - fever
 - new/ increased pain or swelling in genital area
 - a new vaginal discharge or odour
 - severe vaginal bleeding (soaking through a pad each hour for more than two hours or blood clots larger than the size of a golf ball after the first 24 hours)
 - Anxiety, sadness, or hopelessness beyond a few days.



Natural Remedies

- **Helpful Herbs, Herbal Sitz Bath , Garlic Milk Bath :**
<https://onpointpt.me/perineal-tears/>
- **Regular Sitz Bath:**
https://www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/Health_Information/Health_Topics/Documents/Having_a_Sitz_Bath_at_Home.pdf

