Perineal Care After Delivery

Perineal care is the cleaning of the perineum, which includes the vagina, the anus (rectum), and the area around these openings. Perineal care is done each time you urinate or have a bowel movement to:

- Help prevent infection
- Comfort sore muscles around the vagina or birth canal
- Stop odor caused by vaginal drainage

Your nurse will teach you how to do perineal care while you are in the hospital and you will continue it when you go home.

Steps for peri care

- You will need to wear a sanitary pad to collect the vaginal drainage.
- Wash your hands before going to the bathroom and after changing your sanitary pad. Do not use tampons!
- While in the hospital, place dirty pads in the red trash bag in your room.
- Use your “peri bottle” to spray water onto your perineal area after going to the bathroom.
- Gently wipe or pat this area from front to back with toilet paper. This prevents the spread of germs from the rectum to the bladder and vagina.
- After perineal care, apply sprays, ointments, or ice packs as advised by your health care provider.
- Change the sanitary pad every few hours or as needed.

Ways to soothe the perineal area

- Ice packs are available to place on your perineal area, episiotomy, or hemorrhoids. The ice may help to decrease swelling and relieve perineal discomfort.
- Sitz baths are portable bowls that fit on top of the toilet seat and can be filled with warm water.
  - Soak the perineal area in the water for 15 to 20 minutes, or as recommended by your doctor or nurse.
  - Gently pat the area dry with toilet paper.
  - Use the sitz bath several times a day.
  - You can also use 1 to 2 inches of water in your bathtub instead of a sitz bath bowl.
**After leaving the hospital**

- Continue your perineal care and always wash your hands after.
- Call your health care provider if you have any bad smelling vaginal discharge or itching for a long time.
- At home, place dirty pads in a small bag or wrap in toilet paper to control odor and place in the trash. Do not flush pads down the toilet.
- Do not douche to get rid of odor, unless told to by your health care provider.
- Use only sanitary pads until you have your postpartum check up in 4 to 6 weeks. Ask your health care provider when you can use tampons again.
- Do not use any powders, oils, or perfumes in the perineal area.