



PERINEAL MASSAGE IN PREGNANCY

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PERINEAL MASSAGE DURING PREGNANCY

Here are some reasons you may want to use perineal massage during pregnancy:

- Some health care providers believe that perineal massage will increase the “stretchiness” of this area. This means you may have a smaller chance of tearing or needing an episiotomy.
- While you massage, you can practice relaxing the muscles in your perineum. This can help you prepare for the stretching, burning feeling you may have when your baby’s head is born. Relaxing this area during birth can help prevent tearing.

If you wish to use perineal massage, begin 6 weeks before your due date and follow these suggestions:

Wash your hands well, and keep your fingernails short. Relax in a private place with your knees bent. Some women like to lean on pillows for back support.

Lubricate your thumbs and the perineal tissues. Use a lubricant such as vitamin E oil or almond oil, or any vegetable oil like olive oil. You may also try a water-soluble jelly, such as K-Y jelly, or your body’s natural vaginal lubricant. Do not use baby oil, mineral oil, or petroleum jelly.

Place your thumbs about 1 to 1.5 inches inside your vagina (see figure). Press down (toward the anus) and to the sides until you feel a slight burning, stretching sensation. Hold that position for 1 or 2 minutes.

With your thumbs, slowly massage the lower half of the vagina using a “U” shaped movement. Concentrate on relaxing your muscles. This is a good time to practice slow, deep breathing techniques.

Massage your perineal area slowly for 10 minutes each day. After 1 to 2 weeks, you should notice more stretchiness and less burning in your perineum.

