



# Tips for Soothing Perineal Soreness

Whether you tore, had an episiotomy or simply stretched, your perineum will be sore after giving birth. The first week will be the most painful. To ease perineal soreness, try these tips. If you can't get relief or you experience a fever, call your doctor.

- If you have stitches because of an episiotomy or tearing, they'll usually dissolve within three weeks. Keep the area clean.
- The first few days, use ice packs to keep swelling down and help numb the pain.
- After the first few days, try heat for pain relief. Warm sitz baths several times a day are soothing and relaxing.
- Compresses of cotton pads soaked in witch hazel are helpful.
- Expose your perineum to air by lying on a towel on your bed without a pad.
- After you get out of the shower, blow dry the sore area. Use the lowest setting and keep the dryer at least 10 to 12 inches away from the area until it's dry.
- Try sitting mostly on one buttock to take the pressure off the perineum.
- Promote circulation and help speed healing with walking and Kegal exercises: Contract your muscles as if you're trying to stop the flow of urine. Repeat up to 100 times a day.
- Change your sanitary pad at least every four to six hours. Make sure it's secure so it doesn't move around and irritate the tender area.
- Use an inflatable inner tube or small pillow when sitting or bathing.
- Avoid sitting or standing for long periods.
- To help reduce the burn when urinating, drink a lot of water to dilute your urine. Try using a spray bottle of warm water to squirt the perineum while urinating.
- Soreness or the fear of ripping episiotomy stitches may make it difficult to pass stool. Drinking a lot of fluids and eating fiber may make it easier. Supporting your stitches with a wet washcloth may also help.

