

HEALING

- The perineum needs about two weeks to heal.
- The stitches will take 60 to 90 days to dissolve - they do not need to be removed. Pieces of the stitches may fall out from time to time.
- While you are in hospital a midwife will check your stitches each day.
- Let your midwife know if you have any:
 1. increase in bleeding or pain,
 2. smelly discharge on a pad,
 3. bladder discomfort or burning when passing urine,
 4. difficulty using your bowels.
- After discharge from hospital see your doctor if you have any of the problems mentioned above.
- Visit your doctor at six weeks for your postnatal check.
- Read your physiotherapy handouts for further care and follow up.

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Produced by the Women's and Children's Health Service
October 2006
© September 2004
WCHS 0110 Rev.1

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Caring for your perineum following the birth of your baby



THE PERINEUM

- The perineum is the skin between the vagina and the anus, which thins out and stretches over the baby's presenting part (usually the head) as it is born.
- Many women need stitches (sutures) to repair any tears or cuts (episiotomy) that occurred during childbirth.

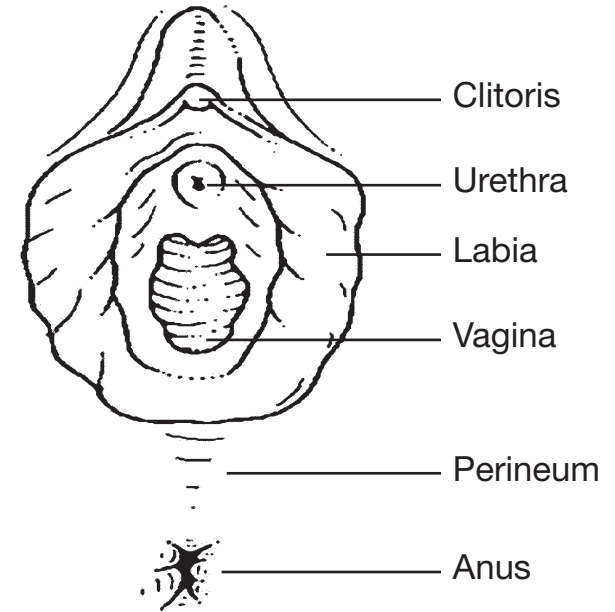
TO CARE FOR YOUR STITCHES

- **Keep clean** - by showering daily, plus using the shower hose or pouring water over the area every time you go to the toilet.
- **Keep dry** - pat gently with a clean towel.
- **Change pads** - every two to three hours.
- **For six weeks avoid:**
 - salt baths
 - powders
 - creams
 - tampons.

TO REDUCE DISCOMFORT

- **Pain relief** - take two paracetamol tablets, no more frequently than every six hours.
- **Crushed ice** – wrapped in a covering (for example, Chux) and applied to swollen area for ten minutes only, then replace with a dry pad. Reapply ice every two to three hours until swelling is reduced.
- **Position** - lie on your side when resting. Avoid sitting for long periods.
- **Ultrasound** - this may help to reduce any swelling and bruising. Ask your midwife to contact the physiotherapist for you.
- **Recommended Bowel habits:**
 1. Drink extra fluid during the day.
 2. Always go to the toilet when you get the urge.
 3. Sit with knees apart, leaning forward, rest elbows on knees.
 4. Do not strain.
 5. When opening your bowels place a pad or toilet paper around your fingers and support your stitches.
 6. Mild laxative may be taken.
- **Pelvic floor exercises** - gentle pelvic floor exercises, just a few at a time, will help reduce bruising and swelling.

YOUR PERINEUM



You have had a:

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Special instructions:

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