



Freyja Medical Clinic

570 Price Av., Suite 100, Redwood City, CA

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## **Perineal Massage Handout**

### **What is Perineal massage?**

Perineal massage involves gently stretching the tissues that surround the opening to the vagina in order to help with the delivery.

### **What is the Perineum?**

The perineum is the area of skin between your vagina and rectum.

### **What are the benefits of perineal massage?**

Perineal massage may:

- Make you less likely to have a deeper tear during delivery.
- Cause you to experience less stinging sensation during the baby's crowning.
- Familiarize you with the stretching sensations of birth so you can more easily relax these muscles at birth.

### **When Should I start doing the massage and how long does it take per day to do?**

This massage technique is performed 10 minutes every day beginning at week 34.

### **Does research support perineal massage?**

Some research has shown that nearly **25%** of women who did the massage had no tears with delivery compared to 15% who did not.

### **Are there any cautions when performing perineal massage?**

- Avoid pressure on the urethra (at the top of the vaginal opening).
- Massage gently! Vigorous massage could cause bruising or swelling.
- Do not massage if you have an active vaginal infection or herpes outbreak.

### **Can my partner help me perform perineal massage?**

Yes, your partner may use their thumbs or index fingers (initially it may only be possible to use one finger). Be sensitive to your body and your feedback on the amount of pressure to use.

### **Instructions for performing perineal massage:**

- Sit or lean back in a comfortable position. (A warm bath or warm washcloth on the perineum for 10 minutes before message may help you to relax.)
- Put a water-soluble lubricant (KY Jelly, Olive oil, vegetable oil, vit E oil) on your thumbs and perineum.
- Place your thumbs 1 to 1 ½ inches inside your vagina.
- Press downward towards the rectum and to the sides at the same time until a slight burning, stinging, or tingling sensation is felt.
- Hold the pressure for 2 minutes until the area becomes numb.
- Breathe deeply and slowly and try to consciously relax the muscles.
- Keep pressing down with your thumbs and slowly and gently massage back and forth over the sides of you vagina in a “U” movement for 3 minutes.
- Relax and repeat once.



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**GOOD LUCK!**