

# After-pains and Perineal Discomfort



Do you have after-pains or is your perineal wound causing pain and discomfort? This handout has some suggestions to help you feel more comfortable.

## *After-pains*

The fierce, painful contractions of labour and birth will disappear after the baby is born. However, to aid the delivery of the placenta, control blood loss and cause the uterus to return to its normal size, you will have some mild contractions, which might cause some discomfort. If you have had a child before, it is more common for you to suffer from these after-pains in the first 2-3 days after the birth of the baby. You might also feel your uterus contract whilst you feed your baby, because the same hormone that causes milk ejection, also causes the uterus to contract. This discomfort can be released by placing a warm water bottle on your abdomen. The doctor or midwife may also recommend you to use pain killers (for example 500-1000 mg paracetamol, every 4-6 hours). Do use any medication under supervision of your doctor or midwife as some medicines may affect the breastfeeding baby. The doctor or midwife might also want to check that there isn't any other reason for the abdominal pain. If you experience pain and tenderness during abdominal pressure, you have a temperature of  $>37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ , a rapid pulse, offensive lochia, please contact your doctor.

## *Perineal Discomfort*

If you had an episiotomy or a tear, you might sense discomfort and pain, which may make it hard to even sit down. In order to prevent infection and to make you more comfortable, it is important to keep the perineum (the area between the vagina and the rectum) clean and dry:

- Change your pads regularly (every 2-3 hours)
- Change your underwear regularly (at least daily)
- Clean the vulva with lukewarm water daily. Use a towel to gently dry the area after washing.

The advice below might help to reduce perineal discomfort:

- Rinse the vulva with lukewarm water whilst passing urine, then gently dry the vulval area
- Freeze a wet pad, put the frozen pad in a towel or wash cloth, and place it on the perineal wound
- Use painkillers (under supervision of your doctor)
- The sutures that the doctor has used to stitch the perineal wound usually dissolve by themselves. However, a swollen perineum may cause the sutures to be tight causing pain and discomfort. If this is the case, you might want to ask the doctor to remove the stitches after 5-6 days.

If your perineal wound is red, swollen, pussy, please inform your doctor.

Please be aware that the information provided is intended solely for general educational and informational purposes only. It is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the advice of your physician for any questions you may have regarding your medical condition. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have received in this program.

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