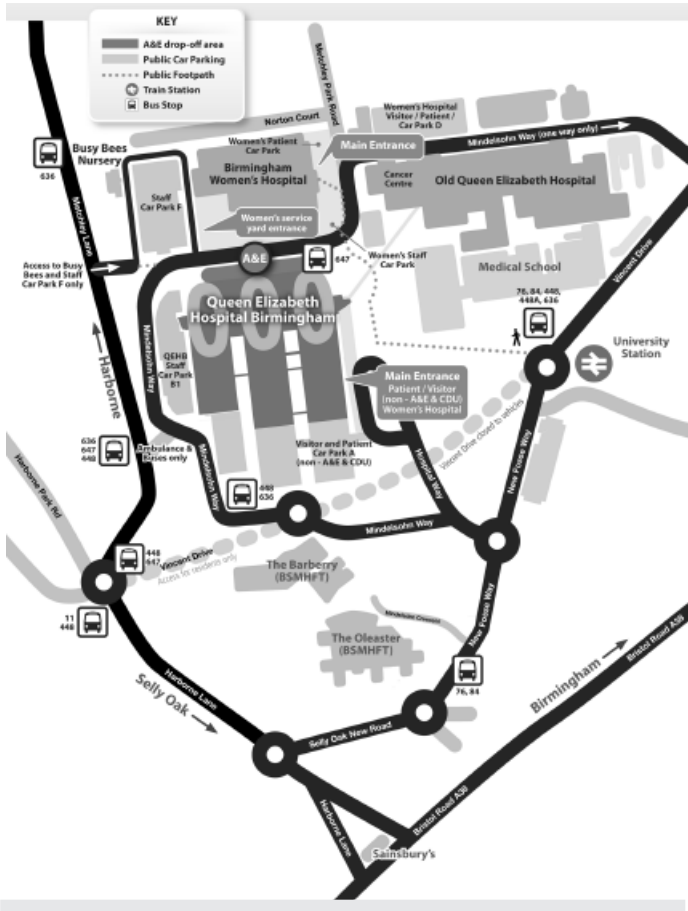




Perineal Care following Childbirth



Ref 89/09/2010 Review 02/2012

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Printed by Kall Kwik Walsall. Tel: 01922 722022

**Physiotherapy
Patient Information**

If your perineum is painful, swollen or bruised or you have haemorrhoids (piles). This leaflet gives some advice on what you can do to help yourself.

In the first 24 hours, an ice pack can ease pain and help to reduce any swelling and bruising. Lie on your side and place the pack next to your perineum for ten minutes at a time. You can do this every 2 to 3 hours. Ask your midwife to help you with this.

- **DO** use cool water in the bidet or shower particularly if ice is not available. Your midwife or auxiliary nurse will show you how to use it. This will keep your skin and stitches, clean (if you have them).
- **DO** pat dry with toilet paper rather than a towel or flannel. This reduces the risk of infections. If you don't have a bidet at home you could use a non-breakable plastic jug, filled with luke warm water, and pour it gently over the perineum when sitting on the toilet. This can be very soothing.
- **DO** use only one sanitary towel at a time and change this frequently. This will be more comfortable and aid healing.
- **DO** use positions of comfort, ie. lying on your side, with a pillow between your knees; lying on your back with your knees bent; lying on your tummy if this is comfortable; sitting in a chair on two pillows, with a gap between them. Sit on the gap. A rubber ring is not recommended. It can delay healing.
- **DO** rest and recover from your birth experience or surgery. Rest and sleep aid healing.
- **DO** avoid getting constipated or straining. It can be a few days before you have your bowels opened again. If you are uncomfortable ask your midwife or doctor for advice. If you are worried about your stitches, put a pad of toilet paper over them and hold.

Relax leaning forwards resting elbows on knees and let it happen. Give it time. Generally, plenty of water, fresh fruit and vegetables, keeps the bowels moving.

- **DO** ask for help if you have haemorrhoids (piles). In time they will shrink and pelvic floor exercises can help.
- **DO** continue to do pelvic floor exercises. Doing them will help absorb any bruising and swelling and aid healing. (See main booklet). It helps to link these exercises with some other activity, eg. when feeding your baby, AFTER going to the toilet, or every time you have a drink - or all of those times!
- **DO** check your wound when you get back home and check that it is healing (a small mirror will be useful). Your midwife or health visitor or district nurse may do this for you if they are following you up at home.
- **DO** use your 6-week check up and tell the doctor if all is not well or comfortable. He/she does rely on you telling him/her of your symptoms. If you are having problems with leakage urine, this is the time to get referred to a specialist Physiotherapist to help you.
- **DO NOT** use soap/talc/cream/bubble bath until your wound is completely healed.
 - Keep it cool
 - Keep it clean
 - Keep it dry
 - Keep it exercised
 - Keep off it
 - Don't strain - tell us if in pain

Remember do not use your tummy, buttocks or legs when you are doing your pelvic floor exercises, but only pull up around your back and front passage (anus and vagina).

Also your bladder should be working well. You should pass water every 3 to 4 hours following a normal urge, passing about $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pint of urine, with a good stream and have no pain. Please inform your midwife or obstetric physiotherapist if you have problems with your waterworks.