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## **Perineal Massage**

The message should be done daily for at least 5 minutes, beginning about 6 weeks before your due date. Either you, your husband, or partner can do the massage.

Make yourself comfortable by lying in a semi-seated position against some pillows.

The first few times you do this, take a mirror and look at your perineum so you know what you are doing.

Wash your hands thoroughly.

You can use warm compresses on the perineum for about 10 minutes prior. Put a lubricant such as KY jelly, cocoa butter, olive oil, vitamin E oil or pure vegetable oil on your thumbs and around the perineum and lower vaginal wall.

Doing the massage: If you are doing the massage yourself it is probably easiest to use your thumbs. Your partner can use their index fingers. Put your fingers 3 inches into the vagina and press downward toward the rectum. Maintaining steady pressure, slide your fingers upward along the sides of the vagina, moving them in a rhythmic U or sling type movement. This movement will stretch the vaginal tissue (mucosa), the muscles surrounding the vagina, and the skin of the perineum. In the beginning, you will feel tight, but with time and practice, the tissue will relax and stretch. Concentrate on relaxing your muscles as you apply pressure.

As you become comfortable massaging, use enough pressure until the perineum just begins to sting from the tension you apply. You will later recognize this stinging sensation as the baby's head is being born and your perineum stretches around it. This is also a good time to add Kegel exercises to your routine to help you get a feel for your pelvic muscles.

If you have any questions after trying the massage, please contact our Physician Coordinators at extension 124.