

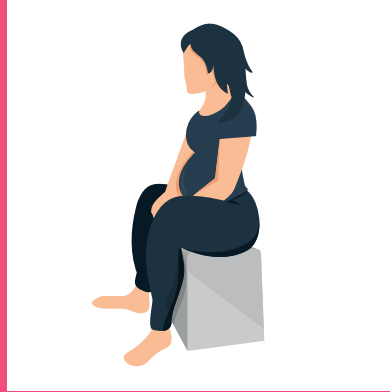
Antenatal Perineal Massage

massage preparation

It is important you find a comfortable position.
Here are some suggestions:



Reclining on pillows
on a bed or sofa



Sitting on a
chair or toilet



In the shower with one
leg resting on a stool

Perineal Massage promotes the *skin* around the *perineum* to *stretch* more easily during childbirth & has been shown to reduce the risk of a *perineal tear* or *episiotomy*.

How often?



Approx. **10 mins**



3-4
times
a week

When?

APM can be practised by women in their **3rd trimester** of pregnancy from...

34
WEEKS

Preparation

Hygiene:
ensure hands
are washed &
fingernails
short.



Prepare: have a mirror to hand for assistance.
A small mirror can be a helpful visual guide and connect you and your body, especially when preparing for birth.



Time: choose a space which feels comfortable & quiet.
This is 'your time, your space' to connect your body & mind.



Unwind: A warm bath may help to relax.
This enables the blood vessels to dilate, softening the perineum in preparation for massage.



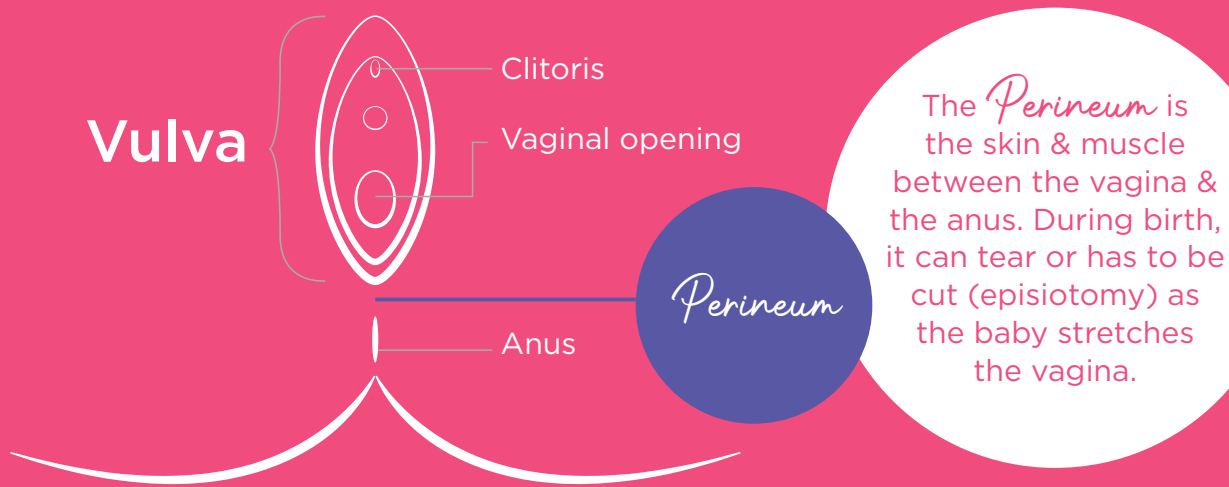
Safety

A mild, prickling sensation is common especially when starting to practise APM. It is important to address any concerns you may have before you begin the massage with a **health care professional**.

Women with genital herpes, thrush or any other **active vaginal infection should not practice APM**. It may be helpful to discuss perineal massage technique with your midwife at your antenatal appointment.

Antenatal Perineal Massage

the massage technique



The more *prepared & comfortable* you are with your body & the natural physiological birth process, the more *relaxed* you will be when your baby's *head* is emerging.

Benefits of APM

- Lowers the risk of tearing & episiotomy
- Stretches tissues & scar tissue
- Helps prepare women for birth

A step-by-step guide to Antenatal Perineal Massage

<p>1</p> <p>Make small, circular movements either side of the vulva, to warm the tissue.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Put thumb or finger 2-3 centimetres into vagina.</p> <p>Gently stretch the tissue at the vaginal entrance, holding it between thumb and forefinger.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Massage from the 6 o'clock to 3 o'clock position, then from the 6 o'clock to 9 o'clock position.</p> <p>Focus on the area at the entrance to the vagina. Take time and repeat each side 3-4 times.</p> <p>Be gentle but firm enough to work into the tissue.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Finish with gentle outwards stretches at the 5 and 7 o'clock positions, holding for 30-45 seconds.</p> <p>Mothers may find it helpful to stretch any scar tissue from previous births.</p>