

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3182. We will try our best to meet your needs.

[Twitter.com/WhitHealth](https://twitter.com/WhitHealth)
[Facebook.com/WhittingtonHealth](https://facebook.com/WhittingtonHealth)

Whittington Health NHS Trust
Magdala Avenue
London
N19 5NF
Phone: 020 7272 3070
www.whittington.nhs.uk

Date published: 14/01/2019
Review date: 14/01/2021
Ref: WHO&D/WomHealth/PP/01

© Whittington Health
Please recycle



Perineal protection

A patient's guide



Warm compress

A warm compress applied to your perineum during the pushing stage, just before you give birth, may reduce your risk of tearing and provide some relief and comfort.

Please have a flannel ready for the midwife to make a warm pack to use when you're in labour if you would like one.

Why we may offer an episiotomy

Midwives and Doctor's will try to avoid you having an episiotomy (a cut in the area between the vagina and anus - the perineum) during childbirth but there are some circumstances when it is recommended.

An episiotomy will be offered and discussed with you if:

- Your baby develops shows signs of **distress** on the heart rate monitor and has to be delivered quickly.
- Need delivery by **forceps or ventouse** (instrumental delivery)
- To avoid an **extensive tear**

Positions in labour

It's important to try different positions in labour and find what works for you. Upright positions work with gravity to help your baby descend in the pelvis during labour such as: standing, all fours, squatting, using a birthing stool but you may also feel you need to rest at times.

Lying on your left side is a good position for resting in labour as it allows space in the pelvis for baby to descend.



When it comes to **pushing**, great positions include all-fours, semi-sitting or lying on your left side with your upper leg raised in order to open the pelvis.



Your midwife may protect your perineum by supporting the baby's head with their hand and also advise you when to stop pushing and just breathe – this is to let the baby's head deliver very slowly.