

## HERBS FOR POSTPARTUM PERINEAL CARE

If you have a perineal tear or an episiotomy, a sitz bath will soothe and heal, keep the tissues flexible and reduce itching. Even if you have a lovely, intact perineum, it is likely to be sore. A PERSON came through there! Herbal sitz baths help prevent infection, aid healing and offer pain relief.

- ◆ If you don't have herbs ready, try putting cold packs on your perineum to soothe the pain from tears or episiotomies.
  - ☺ Ask for a sterile latex glove, fill it with ice and use that as a cold pack. Try covering the glove with a surgical head cover/shower cap-looking thing or a spare newborn's hat.
  - ☺ Cut a hole on the inside front edge of a clean baby diaper (at the place where baby's belly would be if baby were wearing the diaper). Fill the lining of the diaper with ice chips. Tape or fold closed and use that as a cold pack.
- ◆ Prepare an infusion of yarrow, rosemary, golden seal, oak bark, witch hazel, and myrrh. Put four ounces of dried herb in a half gallon of boiling water and steep for eight hours. Strain the liquid from the herbs and pour it into a shallow basin or pan. Sit in this for fifteen minutes at least twice a day. If you have stitches, limit your sitz bath to one per day.
- ◆ A paste of slippery elm bark, water and olive oil or Vitamin E oil, used directly on the tear or incision, binds together torn tissues, soothes pain and strengthens the skin surface. Comfrey root powder added to this paste speeds the healing.
- ◆ Boil comfrey leaves. Then use gauze pads, as described below, for comforting postpartum perineal healing.
- ◆ Try soaking gauze pads in the sitz bath herbs and freezing each pad in a separate zip-lock bag. Run the pad, still enclosed in the bag, under cool water until the pad is pliable, but still icy cold. Put the herbal pads directly on the perineum. This helps reduce tissue swelling and feels great!
- ◆ Try applying St. John's Wort oil.
- ◆ Lavender oil has been shown to be effective in relieving discomfort. Put the oil in your bath until your baby is 10 days old.
- ◆ Combine ¼ cup comfrey, ¼ cup uva ursi, ¼ cup chamomile, and ¼ cup shepherd/s purse. Add the herbs to water, bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for 20 minutes. Use this tea as a rinse for the perineal area or use it to make compresses with sterile gauze or cloth.

You can purchase postpartum bath herbs at:

- ♥ Earth Mama Angel Baby Organics  
[www.earthmamaangelbaby.com](http://www.earthmamaangelbaby.com)
- ♥ In His Hands Birth Supply  
[www.inhishands.com](http://www.inhishands.com)
- ♥ Wish Garden Herbal Remedies  
[www.wishgardenherbs.com](http://www.wishgardenherbs.com)