Perineal Massage

Perineal massage is a wonderful way to improve the health, blood flow, and relaxation of your pelvic floor muscles. This technique will help you to identify and become familiar with the tissues and muscles you’ll relax and the area through which you’ll birth your baby. The massage should be done every day starting at around 34-36wks gestation, for at least five minutes. As you or your partner massage, allow these muscles to relax and open outward in response to pressure.

* Pour a little virgin olive oil, coconut oil, almond oil or a lubricating gel into a shallow bowl. (Avoid scented oils, and be sure to discard oil that’s left over after massaging.)
* Sit with your back resting against pillows and get comfortable. It’s a good idea to use a mirror the first few times you do this exercise. It will help you to identify the muscles involved and allow you to observe the easing of the edge of the perineum.
* Dip your thumb into the oil and thoroughly moisten it. If a partner is doing the massage, they will use their first and middle fingers. The thumb or fingers should be dipped into the oil to the second knuckle and inserted into the vagina approximately two to three inches, pressing downward on the area between the vagina and the rectum. Rub the oil into the inner edge of the perineum and the lower vaginal wall.
* Maintaining a steady pressure, slide the fingers upward along the sides of the vagina in a U, sling-type motion. This pressure will stretch the vaginal tissue, the muscles surrounding the vagina and the outer rim of the perineum. Be sure the stretch the inner portions as well as the outer rim of the perineum. In the beginning you’ll feel the tightness of the muscles, but with time and practice, the tissue will relax.
* Practice relaxing the extended muscles by picturing the perineum opening outward as pressure is applied.

