
For more information visit:

- **NHS Choices**
www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/how-to-make-birth-plan/
- **Which**
www.which.co.uk/birth-choice/getting-ready-to-give-birth/your-birthplan

Getting ready for birth

Towards the end of pregnancy, you may feel a variety of different emotions as the birth becomes closer. You may feel excited, anxious or even scared – this is all normal. There are several things that you can do to help your mind and body prepare for birth.

Perineal massage

Massaging the perineum (the area between the vagina and anus) in the later weeks of pregnancy has been shown to reduce the likelihood of tearing during birth, and of needing stitches or an episiotomy. You can start this from when you are 34 weeks pregnant and practice it daily/every other day until the birth of your baby.



How to do it:

- wash your hands
- sit comfortably with your legs bent at the knees so you can reach your perineum easily. Use a mirror if you wish
- massage oil (preferably vegetable-based) into the skin of the perineum using fingers and thumbs
- place one or both thumbs inside your vagina and press downwards towards the anus. Move to each side in a U-shaped stretching movement. This may give a tingling/burning sensation