

Comparison 2: Warm perineal compress compared with control ("hands off" or usual care)

Source: Aasheim V, Nilsen A, Reinar L, Lukasse M. Perineal techniques during the second stage of labour for reducing perineal trauma. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2017;(6):CD006672.

No. of studies	Study design	Quality assessment					No. of participants		Effect		Certainty (GRADE)	Importance
		Risk of bias	Inconsistency	Indirectness	Imprecision	Other considerations	Warm compresses	Control (hands off or no warm compress)	Relative (95% CI)	Absolute (95% CI)		
Intact perineum												
4	RCTs	not serious	not serious	not serious	not serious	none	229/934 (24.5%)	204/865 (23.6%)	RR 1.02 (0.85-1.21)	5 more per 1000 (from 35 fewer to 50 more)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ HIGH	critical
Third- or fourth-degree tears												
4	RCTs	not serious	not serious	not serious	not serious	none	18/934 (1.9%)	39/865 (4.5%)	RR 0.46 (0.27-0.79)	24 fewer per 1000 (from 9 fewer to 33 fewer)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ HIGH	critical
Perineal trauma needing suturing												
1	RCT	serious ^a	not serious	not serious	very serious ^{b,c}	none	24/38 (63.2%)	21/38 (55.3%)	RR 1.14 (0.79-1.66)	77 more per 1000 (from 116 fewer to 365 more)	⊕○○○ VERY LOW	critical
First-degree tear												
2	RCTs	serious ^d	not serious	not serious	very serious ^{b,c}	none	63/170 (37.1%)	30/104 (28.8%)	RR 1.19 (0.38-3.79)	55 more per 1000 (from 179 fewer to 805 more)	⊕○○○ VERY LOW	critical
Second-degree tear												
2	RCTs	serious ^d	not serious	not serious	very serious ^{b,c}	none	34/170 (20.0%)	20/104 (19.2%)	RR 0.95 (0.58-1.56)	10 fewer per 1000 (from 81 fewer to 108 more)	⊕○○○ VERY LOW	critical
Episiotomy												
4	RCTs	not serious	not serious	not serious	serious ^b	none	55/934 (5.9%)	54/865 (6.2%)	RR 0.86 (0.60-1.23)	9 fewer per 1000 (from 14 more to 25 fewer)	⊕⊕⊕○ MODERATE	critical

CI: confidence interval; RCT: randomized controlled trial; RR: risk ratio.

^a Only one study at moderate risk of bias.

^b Wide confidence interval crossing the line of no effect.

^c Small sample size and/or few events.

^d Most of the pooled effect derived from studies with a moderate or high risk of bias but without a substantial proportion (i.e. with < 50%) from studies with a high risk of bias.