

SITZ BATH INSTRUCTIONS

Sitz is derived from the German verb *sitzen*, meaning to sit. This is an appropriate term for what to do in a sitz bath, which is to merely sit in warm water. This treatment of localized bathing is prescribed for people who have hemorrhoids, bladder infections, perineal pain from episiotomy and childbirth, and vaginal and vulvar surgeries. Some women find this helpful for uterine cramping.

To perform a sitz bath you will need a bathtub, shallow bucket or a plastic sitz bath. The plastic sitz bath sits over the toilet and is recommended. Any of these sitz baths come with the ability to continuously add warm water to the bath. The overflow of the bath then goes into the toilet. You can buy a plastic sitz bath at most pharmacies, Wal-Mart and Target. Cleanliness is important when using a sitz bath of any type. This is not a time for bathing or just soaking oneself for relaxation. If a plastic sitz bath is not available, a standard bathtub will suffice.

The following steps will guide you through the process of taking a sitz bath:

- Prepare the sitz by cleaning it.
- Fill the tub with three to four inches of water. (The water should be kept very warm but, not so hot as to burn you.)
- Add ½ cup of Epsom salt.
- Soak the perineum with the knees bent or even better, legs out of the water for 15 to 20 minutes three to four times daily during the acute phase.
- If the sitz bath is for a vaginal infection, adding ½ cup of table vinegar with the salt can be helpful.
- When getting out, carefully pat yourself dry with a clean towel. Do not rub.

Optional if you feel that you did not respond well to the standard sitz bath above:

- Prepare the bath as above with very warm, almost hot, water.
- Soak the perineum for 10 minutes.
- Stand up in the water.
- Pull a very cold towel between the legs and lift up in the front and the back for 60 seconds.
- Sit back down in the very warm water for 5 minutes.
- Repeat this 3 to 5 times.