

## Erfahrungsbericht zur Anwendung von EPI-NO

The novel way to prepare the perineum?

I work as a free-lance midwife in Gossau, Switzerland. Four years ago I opened up a studio at which I offer courses for birth preparation, retroplasia and perineal gymnastics in the case of bladder problems. Up to autumn 1999 I motivated my female clients to prepare their perineum according to the traditional method (with massage). Then I came across an article on EPI-NO.

I phoned the company immediately, we made arrangements to meet and I was given a folder with documentation, press reports, statistics as well as demonstration equipment. I was sceptical and found it difficult to trust the statistics from Germany. I passed on the information on this novel equipment in my courses (without being fully convinced of the benefits). Nobody was really interested in this device.

After negotiating with management I was given three devices for testing purposes. I deliberately only gave these devices to primiparae who were willing to train regularly. The success was overwhelming, all three women experienced childbirth without episiotomy. In the three and a half years of working as a midwife I had only had two women who gave birth to their child without episiotomy (every 8 weeks about 20 pregnant women are registered). My statistics among primiparae since January 2000:

- 18EPI-NO sold
- 14 women have already given birth
- 7 women without episiotomy
- 3 women with grazing of the skin without seam
- 1 woman with perineal tear, degree I (this woman had to interrupt training for 14 days due to a fungal disease of the vagina)
- 1 woman with episiotomy on the grounds of vacuum extraction
- 2 women with sectio cesarea

Preparing the perineum with EPI-NO, my recommendation for the women: Stimulating blood circulation with bath or warm compresses. From the 34th week of pregnancy on: daily individual build-up of tension increasing gradually. From 37th week of pregnancy on: 1-2 times daily 15-20 minutes inflating the balloon. From 38th week of pregnancy: 15-20 minutes stretching and pushing out the balloon.

As not all women decide in favour of EPI-NO, I also still pass on information on conventional perineal preparation. I have already experienced several times that women decide in favour of EPI-NO after practising the perineal massage. The reasons are as follows: More comfortable body position, less strenuous, visible success, reduces fear. The women feel more self-assured and calm down during birth. Training can be combined with breathing, relaxing, establishing mental contact with the baby, reading, watching TV etc. Childbirth without episiotomy or a perineal tear after preparation with EPI-NO. That has the following effects: clearly raises personal well-being and mobility in childbed has a positive effect on retroplasia as there is no formation of scars enhances sensitiveness in the genital area has a prophylactic effect against urine and faeces incontinence reduces fear of sexual intercourse after childbirth. The concerns of married couples that the vagina or vulva will be overstressed as a result of training have not been confirmed. With direct perineal training (starting 6 - 8 weeks after childbirth to strengthen the pelvis) it is easier to restore undamaged muscles.

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