PURPOSE:
To promote cleanliness and comfort, and prevent infection in the postpartum mother.

CONSIDERATIONS:
1. Perineal cleansing should be done after each bowel or bladder elimination.
2. Perineal cleansing, drying, and pad applications should be done from front to back to prevent contamination.

EQUIPMENT:
Clean washcloth
Clean towel
Mild soap
Warm running water
Perineal pads
Impervious trash bag
Jar or squeeze-bottle
Gloves

PROCEDURE:
Perineal Care:
1. Adhere to Standard Precautions.
2. Identify patient and explain procedure to patient.
3. Remove soiled perineal pad and place in appropriate container.
4. Observe the perineal area for redness, edema, ecchymosis, drainage, approximation of wound, if applicable, and hemorrhoids. Postpartum patients may develop edema and hematomas without having an episiotomy or laceration.
5. Instruct patient to check type and amount of lochia and to report anything unusual.
7. Cleanse perineal area with clean washcloth moistened with warm water and soap.
8. Rinse cloth and perineal area well. May use jar or squeeze-bottle of warm, tap water for squirting or pouring water over the perineum while seated on toilet.
9. Dry area well with clean towel.
10. Apply medication, if prescribed.
11. Apply perineal pad, instruct patient to avoid touching the side of the perineal pad that will be worn next to the perineum.

Sitz Bath:
In addition to the above, if patient has sutures, instruct her to take Sitz bath after perineal care, for 20 minutes, at least two times a day.
1. Adhere to Standard Precautions.
2. Explain procedure to patient.
3. Clean tub prior to and after use.
4. Fill tub with water. Water should be 4-6 inches deep with patient sitting in the tub.
5. Test water before use. Cold sitz baths have been found to relieve perineal episiotomy pain better than warm baths.
6. Instruct patient to sit in tub for 20 minutes.
7. Dry perineum well with clean towel.
8. Apply medication, if prescribed.
9. Apply perineal pad, instruct patient to avoid touching the side of the perineal pad that will be worn next to the perineum.
10. Discard soiled supplies in appropriate containers.

AFTER CARE:
1. Document in patient's record:
   a. Procedure and observations.
   b. Patient's response to procedure.
   c. Instructions given to patient.