

DIY Postpartum Padsicles

Supplies

- aluminum foil
- overnight sanitary napkins or pads (or adult diapers)
- alcohol-free witch hazel
- 100% pure unscented aloe vera gel
- 100% pure lavender essential oil

Directions

1. Lay a piece of aluminum foil on the countertop or a table. Make sure you have enough aluminum foil to wrap around the sanitary napkin.
2. Unwrap a sanitary napkin or pad, and lay it on top of the aluminum foil. The back of the sanitary napkin will stick to the foil. Remove the adhesive paper tabs from the sanitary napkin to fully open it.
3. Squeeze unscented 100% pure aloe vera gel generously all over the sanitary napkin. If your aloe vera is in a jar, and not a squeeze bottle, apply the gel to the pad with a spoon. Aloe vera has anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties, which can help relieve inflammation and acute pain. (Do make sure you're using pure aloe vera — nothing with additional chemicals or additives in it.)
4. Using a clean finger, spread or rub the aloe vera gel over the sanitary napkin.
5. Pour or spray alcohol-free witch hazel over the pad. Witch hazel can reduce swelling, pain, and bruising, plus relieve itching and inflammation associated with hemorrhoids.
6. Another option is to add 1 to 2 drops of lavender essential oil onto the sanitary napkin. Lavender oil also has anti-inflammatory properties, as well as a calming effect to relieve anxiety and stress.
7. After applying the aloe vera, witch hazel, and lavender oil, gently fold the aluminum foil over the pad, and then place the wrapped pad in the freezer for at least an hour.

Notes

- Consider preparing several padsicles at once, so you'll have a hefty supply after giving birth.
- Although you'll want to generously apply the aloe vera and witch hazel to the sanitary napkin, don't overdo it and oversaturate the pad. This can reduce how well the pad absorbs postpartum bleeding, resulting in leaks and a big messy cleanup.
- Using aluminum foil is the best approach because it prevents the pads from sticking together once placed in the freezer. If you don't have any sanitary napkins, you might wonder whether you can use cloth pads instead.
- This is possible, just know that cloth doesn't wick away moisture like a disposable sanitary napkin. So if your postpartum flow is heavy, you'll need to change the pad more often, and cloth pads might not be as comfortable as using a disposable sanitary napkin.

What is a padsicle?

A padsicle (short for pad and Popsicle) isn't a term that you're likely to hear often, especially since this isn't a product you buy in stores. But while the idea of using a chilled or frozen sanitary napkin is a new concept for some, padsicles can become your best friend when dealing with postpartum pain.

A padsicle is basically a sanitary napkin that's chilled in the freezer, and then placed inside your underwear to relieve pain and encourage healing after a vaginal delivery. These frozen pads are a lifesaver after childbirth. They not only ease pain, but also reduce swelling, bruising, and discomfort associated with hemorrhoids and vaginal stitches. And the best part? You can make your own padsicles at home in no time.

Some women make a bunch of padsicles in their third trimester – while they still have energy and can move around comfortably – and then keep them in the freezer until they need one. Of course, there's no rule that says you have to make these before your due date. With all the nesting and preparation that goes on before giving birth, you might not have time. Just know that you'll be sore and tired after giving birth. So a DIY project will likely be the last thing on your mind.

With that being said, the best time to build a supply of padsicles is sometime during the last month of pregnancy, so that you're prepared. But if you don't have them made ahead, it just takes a few hours to let them chill in the freezer and they can be ready to go. Of course, you don't have to use padsicles for relief. You can also ease postpartum vaginal pain by sitting on an ice pack. Keep in mind, however, that padsicles are unique because they're covered with natural ingredients that have healing properties and fit into your underwear. This can help you feel better sooner, compared to sitting on an ice pack.

How to use padsicles

Once you're ready to use a padsicle, take it out of the freezer and allow it to thaw for a few minutes, so that it's not too cold. Since the padsicle is nothing more than a sanitary napkin, you'll wear it inside your underwear like you would wear a regular pad.

Another option is to wear the padsicle inside an adult diaper. This might work better for a heavy postpartum flow. An adult diaper provides added protection when a pad alone can't absorb the extra flow. Padsicles can get messy when extremely wet. As your flow lightens, you can later transition to wearing regular underwear.

While a padsicle can provide relief from pain, swelling, and inflammation, the coolness of a pad gradually wears off. Even so, it will continue to offer healing benefits due to the witch hazel and the aloe vera.

Once the coolness wears off, you can replace the padsicle with another one, or wear a regular pad for a bit. As a general rule of thumb, make sure you change a padsicle at least every 4 hours, just like you would change a regular pad.