



Perineal tears

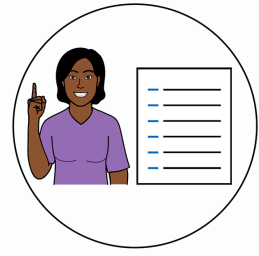
How to get better

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care



Easy English

Hard words



This book has some hard words.

The first time we write a hard word

- the word is in **blue**

- we write what the hard word means.

You can get help with this book



You can get someone to help you

- read this book

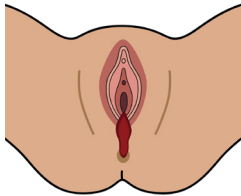
- know what this book is about

- find more information.



About this book

This book is from the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care.

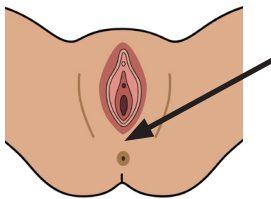


This book is about

- **perineal tears**

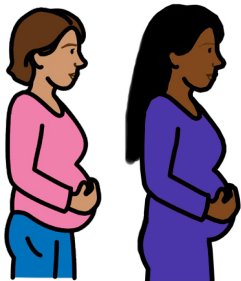
- how to get better.

A perineal tear is when your **perineum** tears when you have your baby.



Your perineum is the area between the opening of your vagina and your bottom.

You might **not** get a tear when you have a baby.



Tears happen to lots of women when they have babies.

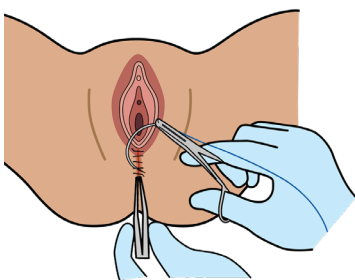
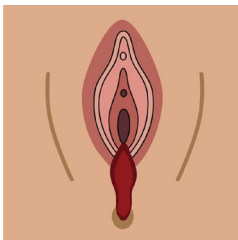
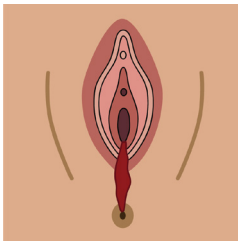
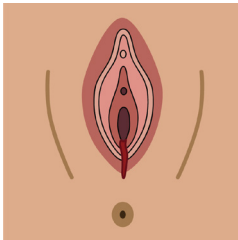
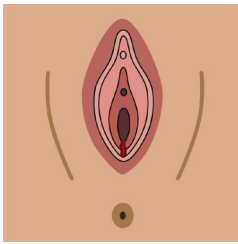
Most tears heal well.

Some tears can be serious.

Types of tears

There are 4 types of tears

- **first degree**
- **second degree**
- **third degree**
- **fourth degree.**



Women with first degree tears might need stitches - but not often.

Women with second degree tears will need stitches.



Women with a third or fourth degree tear will usually need to have it repaired by a doctor in an operating room.

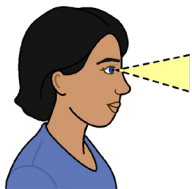
If you have a third or fourth degree tear



Your doctor or **midwife** will check to see if you have a serious tear **after** your baby is born.

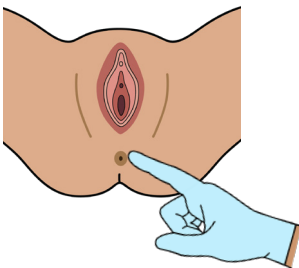


A midwife helps you during pregnancy, when you have your baby and after your baby is born.

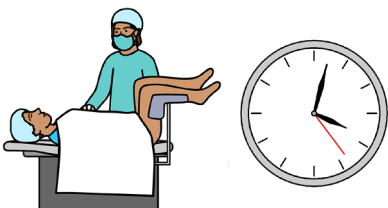


Your doctor or midwife might

- look at the area around your vagina

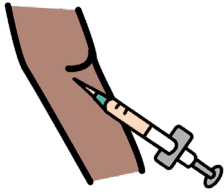


- ask if it is ok to put their finger in your bottom to feel for a tear.

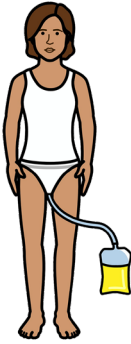


If you have a third or fourth degree tear you will need to have it repaired as soon as possible.

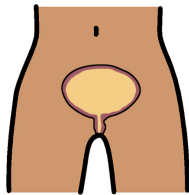
Before your tear is repaired



Before your tear is repaired, you will get medicine so you do **not** feel pain.

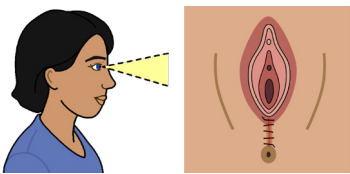


You might also need a tube in your **bladder** to get rid of your wee before you go into the operating room.



Your bladder is a part of your body that holds wee.

After your tear is repaired



After your tear is repaired, your doctor will check your bottom to make sure the stitches are in the right place.



Straight after your tear is repaired, it might hurt to move around too much.

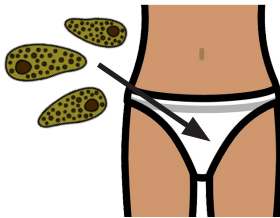


You might need medicine

- to stop the pain

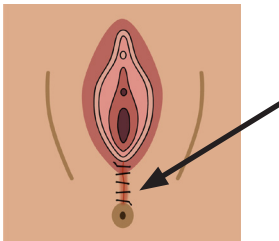


- to make it easier to poo



Infection means germs get into your body and make it hard to get better.

About your stitches



You will have stitches in the area between your vagina and bottom.



This area might feel sore for a little while.



You might also feel a bit of pain when you wee or sit down.

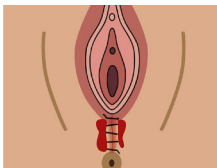
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT

The stitches will get better and most go away in 2 weeks.



You **must** tell your doctor or midwife straight away if you



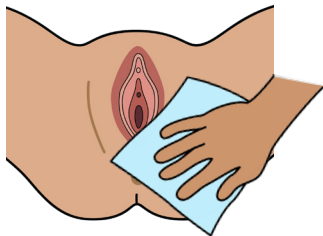
- bleed around your stitches



- feel lots of pain.

You can do things to help your stitches get better.

For example



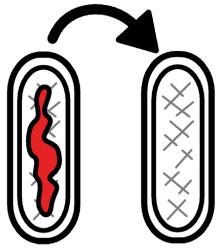
- keep the area between your vagina and bottom clean and dry



- wash this area with water each day

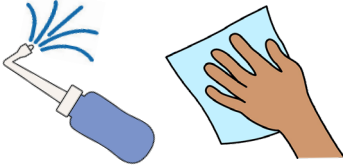


- do **not** use creams or powder on this area.



You can also

- change your pads a lot

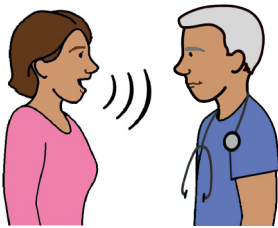


- wash and dry this area after you wee



- wash your hands with soap and water after you go to the toilet.

Talk to your healthcare team



Before you leave hospital your doctor or midwife might talk to you about

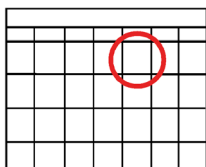
- what happened when you had your baby



- what might happen while you get better

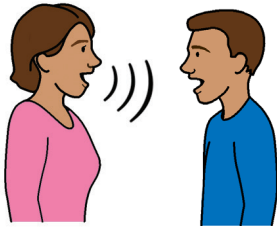


- who to contact if you have questions



- your next appointment.

When you leave hospital



You can ask support people to help you get better and look after your baby.

For example, your partner, friend or family.



You can also get help from your healthcare team.

For example

- your doctor or midwife



- a psychologist to help if you feel sad or worried



- a social worker to help with daily activities

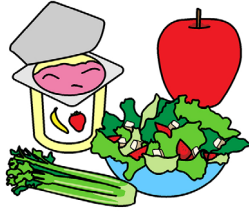


- a physiotherapist with special training or experience to help your body get better.



The physiotherapist can also help you go to the toilet normally again.

How to get better



You can do things to help you get better.

For example

- eat healthy food



- drink lots of water



- do **pelvic floor exercises**.

Pelvic floor exercises make the muscles around your vagina and bottom strong.



You will need help to learn how to do these exercises.



You can talk to your healthcare team if you need extra help.

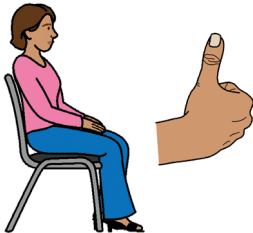
For example, if you wee or poo when you do **not** want to.

Sex after you have a third or fourth degree tear



It is ok to have sex after you have had a third or fourth degree tear - but only when you feel ready.

It is best to wait until the stitches have healed and you have stopped bleeding.



You should **not** feel sore when you walk around or sit down. This usually takes about 1 month.

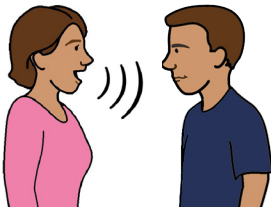


Sex might feel a bit uncomfortable at first.



If you keep having pain during sex or are worried about having sex, you can talk to

- your doctor

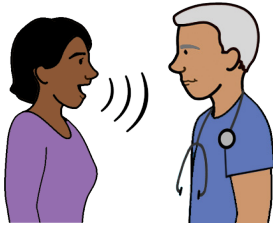


- your midwife



- a physiotherapist with special training or experience.

Having another baby

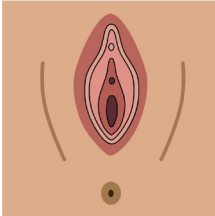


You can talk to your doctor or midwife about having another baby.

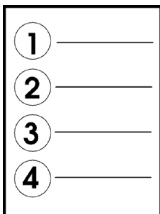


You can ask questions about

- having another baby

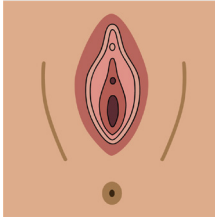


- how to reduce the risk of having another tear



- next steps.

The clinical care standard



The clinical care standard has information about the care women should get

- to reduce the risk of a serious tear
- to get better **after** a serious tear.



You can visit the website

safetyandquality.gov.au/consumers-perineal-tears

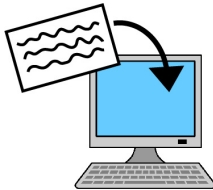
More information



For more information contact
Australian Commission on Safety and Quality
in Health Care.



Call 02 9126 3600



Email mail@safetyandquality.gov.au



If you need help to speak or listen use the
National Relay Service.

Call 1800 555 660



Website
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Give the relay officer the phone number you
want to call.

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