

Caring for your perineal tear and pelvic health after birth

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When should I seek medical advice after I go home?

You should contact your midwife, GP or postnatal ward if:

- your stitches become more painful or smelly – this may be a sign of an infection
- you cannot control your bowels or passing wind
- you have any other worries or concerns – you can be referred to the hospital before your follow-up appointment if necessary

Get in touch

If you have any concerns with your healing, please speak to your health professional or call your local postnatal ward:

Lincoln: Nettleham ward 01522 573134

Boston: Maternity ward 01205 445427

What you can do?

- Keep the area clean and dry and change pads regularly
- Use warm water to gently cleanse the perineal area after each bowel movement. Bathe daily to support healing but avoid long soaks
- Using ice packs on your perineum can also help. The cold will help reduce pain and swelling. Wrap the ice in a tea towel first. Never apply ice or ice packs directly to your skin, as they can cause damage
- Use simple pain relief as prescribed
- Eat healthy and mobilise
- Start pelvic floor exercises – squeeze app

Pelvic health after birth

Your pelvic floor muscles are very important, they hold up your bladder, womb and bowel inside your body. After having a baby, these muscles can feel weak or tired. Taking care of them can help you feel strong and can help prevent problems such as leaking wee, wind or poo.

What can I do to improve my pelvic health?

- Do pelvic floor exercises
- Don't rush back into heavy lifting or hard exercise. Give your body time to heal
- Gentle walks and moving around helps your muscles stay healthy
- Eat healthy foods with lots of fibre and stay hydrated to keep your poo soft, this can help you avoid pushing too hard
- Try to wee when you need it, so your bladder stays healthy

Even with the best birth preparations tears may still happen, especially if this is your first birth. There are things you can do to help your body to heal in addition to rest, care and support. It is important that you stay hydrated, eat healthy, and look after your bladder and bowel and to ensure you keep the area clean. Most tears heal within a couple of weeks.

You may have stitches between your vagina and your anus, and also beneath your skin. These stitches will dissolve over time and fall out, you may notice small threads on your sanitary pad, tissue when wiping, or in the bath. Sometimes these stitches are visible on the outside of your skin, or they may be internal and may not be noticeable.

It is normal to feel some discomfort, pain or soreness for four to six weeks after giving birth. The stitches can irritate or may feel tight as you heal.

When to ask for help

If you notice you are:

- unable to perform a pelvic floor exercise, unsure if you are doing it correctly or need some additional support
- leaking wee or poo (urine or faeces) or cannot control wind
- experiencing persistent weakness or doming of your tummy muscles
- feeling heaviness, pressure or bulging in the pelvic area
- experiencing discomfort during sexual intercourse

You can complete a self-referral to the Perinatal pelvic health service or find more information and some useful short videos on the webpage:

[betterbirthlincolnshire.co.uk/pelvic health](http://betterbirthlincolnshire.co.uk/pelvic%20health)



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Let's Talk Vaginas #PelvicHealthMattersLincolnshire

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www.accessable.co.uk/united-lincolnshire-hospitals-nhs-trust

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If you require this information in another language or alternative format, please email the Patient Information team at ulth.patient.information@nhs.net