

Information following 4th degree tear

Information for Patients



What is a third or fourth degree tear?

The 'perineum' is the part of the body which is between the vagina and the back passage. Forth degree tears are injuries which extend downwards from the vagina involving the muscle at the opening of the back passage and the rectal lining.

Why do they happen?

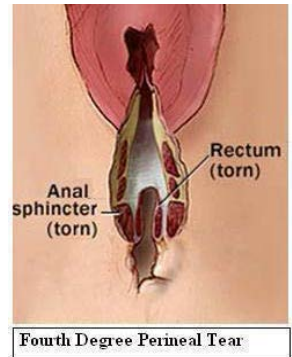
These tears are rare. They are more likely to happen when the baby is bigger, with a first baby, with epidurals and long labour, with episiotomies and forceps deliveries or when the birth is very fast.

How was the tear repaired?

Your tear has been repaired by the obstetric doctors using dissolvable stitches.

What measures help with healing?

- Antibiotics will reduce the risk of an infection (safe for breast feeding)
- Pain killers e.g. Paracetamol, should be taken but NOT codeine based as these encourage constipation.
- Laxatives will also be prescribed so that you do not have to strain to open your bowels and risk damaging the stitches. Supporting the perineum with a sanitary pad held in your hand will make a bowel movement more comfortable.



- Drink up to 2 litres of fluids a day and eat a healthy diet which includes plenty of fruit, vegetables, cereals and wholemeal bread and pasta.
- Maintain a good standard of personal hygiene by taking regular baths or showers and changing your sanitary pads often.

To tone and strengthen the pelvic floor muscles do the exercises as shown in The Fit for the Future booklet you will have received in your post natal pack

Follow up?

It is common to have mild symptoms related to your bowel and bladder after this tear. With time these symptoms should resolve. You will have follow up in the first six months following the repair to monitor your recovery. It is important you attend ALL the appointments.

4 weeks	Physiotherapy Review
6-10 weeks	Named Obstetrician
3-4 months	Urogynaecology Consultant
6 months	Colorectal consultant/Scan

If you have any concerns outwith this planned schedule please call the Physiotherapist on **01324 566601** or Gynaecology Secretary on **01324 567121**

Research shows that when the repair is carried out by an appropriately trained person and when you follow the advice given above, long term problems are less likely to occur.

You should attend your routine 6 week check with your GP and report any concerns.

This information has been provided for women who deliver at Forth Valley Royal Hospital.

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists also provide information www.rcog.org.uk

We are happy to consider requests for this publication in other languages or formats such as large print.

**Please call 01324 590886 (24hrs),
fax 01324 590867 or email disability.department@nhs.net**

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If you can't go let us know!

Every month around 2,000 people across Forth Valley fail to turn up for hospital appointments. This costs the NHS millions of pounds each year and increases waiting times.

So if you are unable to attend, or no longer require your hospital appointment, please let us know so we can offer it to someone else.

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