



2023

Perineal Injury Information

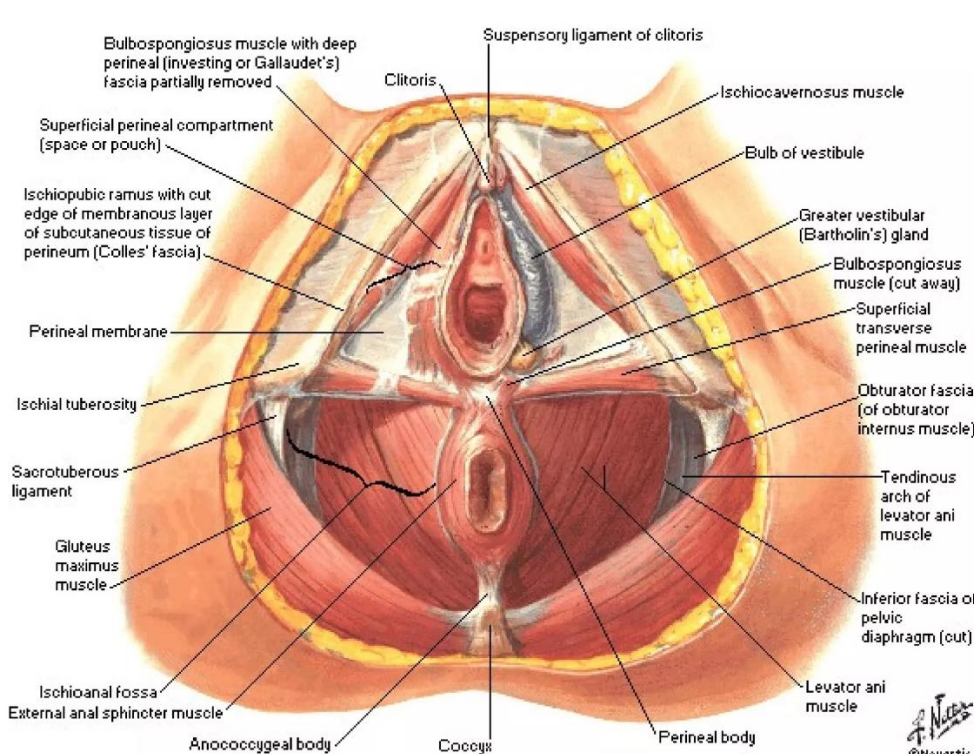


This booklet provides complementary information regarding Perineal Injury and should not be constituted as medical advice, it is for information and education purposes only. If you choose to change your diet, lifestyle or add supplements into your routine, do so in collaboration and under supervision with your medical provider.

Perineal Injury

What is the Perineum?

♦ The diamond shaped area that is the underside of your pelvis



TYPES OF INJURY

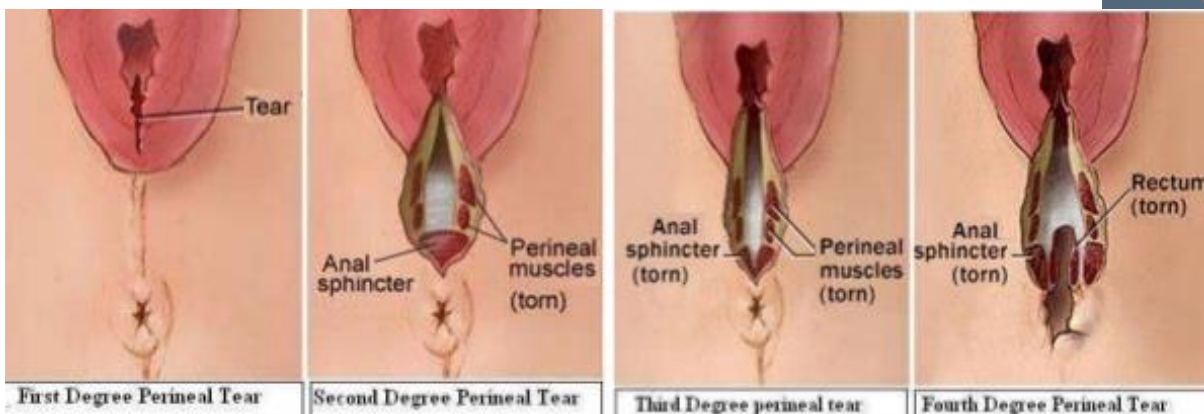
1st degree - laceration is limited to the thin fold of skin at the back of the vulva, superficial perineal skin or vaginal mucosa - Usually heal very quickly without any intervention

2nd degree - laceration extends beyond the thin fold of skin at the back of the vulva, perineal skin or vaginal mucosa to the perineal muscles and fascia, but not the anal sphincter - doesn't involve anal muscles, may or may not benefit from stitches

3rd degree - where perineal skin, vaginal mucosa, muscles and the anal sphincter are torn, doesn't involve the anal mucosa

4th degree - skin, vaginal mucosa, muscles, anal sphincter and rectal mucosa are torn - require repair in an operating theatre.

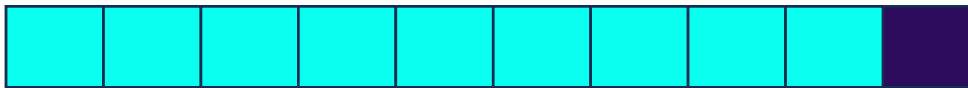
What is Perineal Injury?



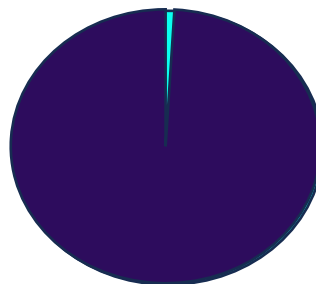
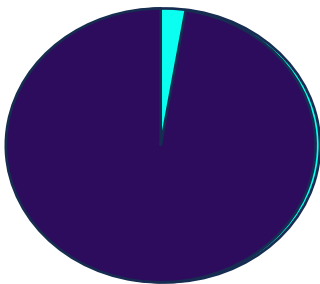
Perineal Injury

How Common is it?

- Around 85% of vaginal births in the UK experience some sort of tear, graze or episiotomy. For the vast majority these are minor and heal quickly. 9 in 10 1st time mothers:



- Around 3-5% experience 3rd-4th degree tears but only 1% experience 3rd-4th degree tears without instrumental birth or episiotomy.



What are the Risk Factors?

- 1st Vaginal birth
- Baby over 4kg (9lbs)
- Prolonged pushing
- Shoulder dystocia
- Instrumental birth
- Episiotomy
- Asian/Caucasian origin
- Younger than 30/older than 35
- Type 1 and Gestational Diabetes
- Prostaglandin pessary
- Head circumference >35cm
- Synthetic oxytocin use
- Awkward presentation baby
- Epidural (some studies)
- Hands on support (3rd degree)
- Compound presentation
- Short perineal body
- Abnormal collagen synthesis
- Hospital birth

OTHER INJURIES

Perineal injury can lead to further complications including:

Pelvic floor muscle damage

Infected wounds/stitches

Obstetric Fistula

Wound dehiscence

Bladder damage

Prolapse

Incontinence

Bladder/Bowel

Pudendal nerve damage

Coccydynia

CONTROLLABLE FACTORS

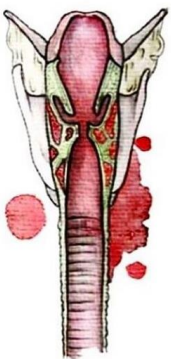
- Avoid Hospital
- Avoid being on your back, in lithotomy, squatting
- Avoid directed pushing
- Avoid syntocinon and artificial prostaglandin labour initiation
- Avoid hands on
- Avoid instrumental birth and episiotomy

Perineal Injury

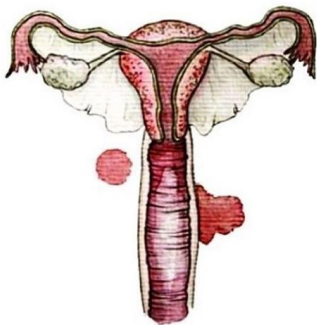
What Reduces the Chances of Injury?

- ♥ Instinctual posture
- ♥ Instinctual breathing and pushing effort
- ♥ Supporting physiology - warm, dark, unobserved, undisturbed, quiet
- ♥ Reducing tension on the perineum (avoid lithotomy, wide knees, allow sacra and coccyx movements, deep squat)
- ♥ Reducing downward force (No coached pushing, no fundal pressure, no chin to chest forced pushing, instinctual positioning)
- ♥ Skilled birth attendant (being quiet, respectful, supportive, hands off)
- ♥ Water birth - warmth for relaxing tissues and less interference

Power to Direct Force Rather
than Forced to Direct Power



Larynx



Uterus



Vocal Cords

Pelvic Floor

Art by Luisa Alexandre

HELPFUL TIPS

- ♥ Slow birth of the baby allows time for tissues to stretch
- ♥ Instinctual postures take tension and force off the perineum when needed
- ♥ Supporting your vulva/baby with your own hand if you feel drawn to
- ♥ Free the sacrum! Side-lying or upright postures, bottom and back off the bed!
- ♥ LISTEN TO THE PERSON BIRTHING!! They are the only person that can feel what is happening in their body.

Relax your jaw and vocal cords
Sound helps to direct force where needed.

[Learn more about breath here](#)

Perineal Injury

Helpful Post Birth Tips

- ♥ Try not to spread your legs wide
- ♥ Allow any injuries to air
- ♥ Use a jug or bottle of water to pour or squirt over your vulva when urinating to help prevent stinging then pat dry or if is this too sore, use a hairdryer
- ♥ Make sure to use a barrier cream like calendula to keep labia separate if there is grazing between
- ♥ Keep hydrated and with plenty of soluble fibre in your diet to prevent constipation and straining e.g. fruit, chia seeds
- ♥ Breathe your poo out, just like your baby - try to relax and let it happen
- ♥ Use a foot stool or block to help ease rectal pressure
- ♥ Hold gentle pressure on your injury when coughing or sneezing
- ♥ A neck pillow can make an excellent cushion to keep pressure off the perineum
- ♥ Incontinence after birth is NOT normal and indicates a need for further investigation or rehab. A pelvic health physio is a good place to start.
- ♥ Begin at home with reconnecting with your breath - 3 dimensional breathing and gentle outward blowing with the natural drawing up of the pelvic floor and hugging of the core.
- ♥ REST!! REST!! REST!!
- ♥ Gentle movement is helpful - a little walk, just to the toilet at first, then to other rooms in the house, then around the garden, then around the block when you feel ready.

HELPFUL TIPS

Helpful herbs/plant medicine for healing:

Calendula

Rosemary

Comfrey

Camomile

Lavender

Yarrow flower

Can be stewed to make a tea to use in a sitz bath or for yoni steaming

Make a padsicle:

Take a sanitary pad and place on a mix of witch hazel, aloe vera and lavender. Place in a sandwich bag in the fridge or freezer. When needed, use for cool and soothing comfort for the perineum



Perineal Injury

Supplements

- ♥ **Vit D, Calcium, zinc, Vit C**: Key role in muscle strength and healing. Combined calcium and vitamin D and protein lead to accelerated wound healing and increased muscle strength. Zinc is integral to the health of connective tissue. Involved in development, growth and remodelling of tissue. Supplementation can improve wound healing following injury
- ♥ **Magnesium**: Optimal tissue and nerve function.
- ♥ **Potassium**: Bananas and avocados are a great source, important for muscle function and maintaining correct fluid levels.
- ♥ **Copper**: Similar role to vit C in wound healing though both have no research showing increased intake improved recovery
- ♥ **Curcumin**: Anti-oxidant - can reduce pain and inflammation during wound recovery.
- ♥ **Collagen**: Helps in connective tissue formation and repair (nutri
- ♥ **Vit E**: Helps with free radical protection, formation of red blood cells, anti-inflammatory for the skin
- ♥ **Omega 3**: Anti-inflammatory or **Vegan Omega 3**
- ♥ **Protein 2-2.5g/kg of body weight/day**: Leucine rich source (whey) for tissue repair - building blocks of the body - amino acids

HELPFUL SUPPLEMENTS LINKS:

I am a naturopath as well as a doula. When taking supplements make sure to adhere to the guidance doses. If you are taking other medications or have specific health concerns, speak to your healthcare provider before taking supplements.

For purchasing Nutri products, you can register as a client seeing a health professional online or over the phone and quote my account number C000331190 if you wish (this is an affiliate account)

Contact Nutri here:

Freephone 0800 043 5777
- Mon-Fri 8:30am-5:00pm

<https://www.nutriadvanced.co.uk/>

Perineal Injury

Dietary Sources of Nutrients

Calcium	Vit D	Zinc
Milk	Salmon	Shellfish
Cheese	Trout	Liver
Yoghurt	Canned Sardines	Chicken
Tofu	Herring	Pork
Canned Sardines	Egg yolk	Beef
Canned Salmon	Butter	Nuts
Almonds	Mushrooms	Eggs
Spinach	Orange	Mushrooms/Kale

PLANT SOURCES TO HELP BOOST COLLAGEN PRODUCTION:

Collagen is not available from plant sources but the following foods help with the building blocks for those following a plant based diet:

- Citrus fruits
- Berries
- Garlic
- Cashews
- Green leafy veg
- Legumes
- Tomatoes

Beef Bone Broth Recipe

- 1.8kg beef bones (short ribs, marrow, neck, joints)
- 1 onion halved
- 5cm finger ginger
- 2 Leeks
- 3 Large carrots
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- Star anise/cloves/salt and pepper to taste

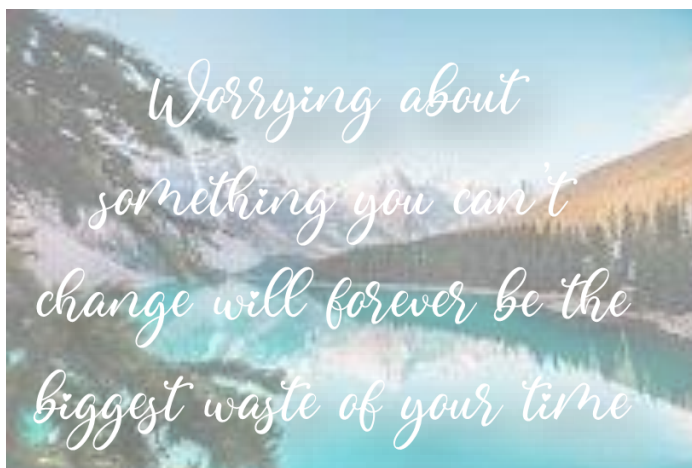


1. Preheat oven to 175°C and roast the bones with the onion and ginger, preferably in an oven proof pot that you can then use to cook on the stove for approx. 30mins, bones are brown and crackled and juice is starting to collect in the pan.
2. Add 2.8L of water, cover the bones by around 2.5cm, add leeks, carrots, vinegar and if using cloves and star anise. Bring to a boil over a high heat, skim off any foam then reduce to simmer for 4+ hours
3. Strain and drink, use as a stock/base for soups, store in fridge for up to 5 days or freeze for up to 3 months

Perineal Injury

Useful Resources and Further Information

- ♥ <https://masic.org.uk/downloadable-guides/>
- ♥ <https://www.makebirthbetter.org/birth-injuries>
- ♥ <https://www.sarawickham.com/research-updates/perineal-care-bundles-clinicians-concerns/>
- ♥ <https://evidencebasedbirth.com/evidence-on-warm-compresses-and-hands-on-vs-hands-off-for-protecting-the-perineum/>
- ♥ <https://evidencebasedbirth.com/evidence-on-birthing-positions-and-tried-and-true-midwifery-practices-for-protecting-the-perineum/>
- ♥ <https://midwifethinking.com/2015/09/09/supporting-womens-instinctive-pushing-behaviour-during-birth/>
- ♥ <https://midwifethinking.com/2016/01/13/perineal-protectors/>
- ♥ <https://midwifethinking.com/2018/05/09/the-perineal-bundle-and-midwifery/>
- ♥ <https://coreandfloor.com.au/>



WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BIRTH?

You can purchase previous Bitesize Birth Lectures and the Birth Ball Flow here:

[Birth Ball Flow](#)

[Gestational Diabetes](#)

[Shoulder Dystocia](#)

[Inlet of the Pelvis](#)

[Mid Pelvis](#)

[Outlet of the Pelvis](#)

[Communication in the Birth Space](#)

[Breathing for Birth](#)

[Online Hypnobirthing Course](#)

[Online Birthing](#)

[Biomechanics Course](#)

[Antenatal Course \(FREE\)](#)