

Information on third/fourth degree tears and what to expect at your clinic appointment

This leaflet offers further details about third and fourth degree tears, and what you can expect when you come to your clinic appointment. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is a third/fourth degree tear?

This is a vaginal tear which has extended into the muscles surrounding the back passage. A small number of women will experience a third or fourth degree tear during childbirth.

Who will I see at the clinic?

You will see:

- a specialist physiotherapist
- a colorectal nurse specialist
- an obstetrician.

What will happen at the clinic?

You will have the opportunity to talk about any bowel, urinary or other problems you have had since the birth of your baby. Your problems may include constipation, loose stools (poo), difficulty getting the stool out, difficulty keeping the stool in, soiling or incontinence.

You will have an ultrasound of your back passage (to look at the structure of the muscles) and you will have anorectal physiology tests (to look at the function of the muscles).

These tests will take approximately 20 minutes. They involve putting a small ultrasound probe (about the size of a finger) and a small tube (about the size of a pen) into your back passage.

Patients often feel embarrassed to talk about bowel or urinary problems. However, you should remember that we are used to talking about these things and hope you will feel comfortable talking to us.

What happens after my tests?

Your results and symptoms will be discussed in our multidisciplinary team meeting and a report summarising the results of your investigations will be sent to you and your GP. We will also give you advice about any plans for future births.

We will see you after six months to discuss the results of the investigations. If you have any bowel or bladder symptoms you will be seen by a specialist physiotherapist or colorectal nurse specialist before this.

Contact us

If you have any questions about your investigations or treatment, please do not hesitate to speak to a member of the team (contact numbers listed below).

- Pelvic Floor Unit secretary (for information on appointments): **020 7188 4191**
- Obstetrics secretary: **020 7188 2233**
- Mr Eugene Oteng-Ntim (lead obstetrician): **020 7188 6843**
- Monica Lyons (nurse manager, Pelvic Floor Unit): **020 7188 4192**
- Paula Iqualada-Martinez (specialist physiotherapist): **020 7188 9898**

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

e: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas' **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Language Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

t: 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

Leaflet number: 2016/VER3

Date published: June 2014

Review date: June 2017

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