

## Patient information factsheet

# Your appointment at the perineal tear clinic

We have given you this factsheet because your doctor has invited you for a follow-up appointment in the perineal tear clinic. It explains what the perineal tear clinic is and what to expect at your appointment. We hope it will answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us using the details at the end of this factsheet.

### What is the perineal tear clinic?

The perineal tear clinic at University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust (UHS) is a specialised clinic for women who have experienced a third or fourth degree perineal tear (a tear in the area between your vagina and back passage) while giving birth. For more information about perineal tears, please read our 'Information and advice if you have had a third or fourth degree perineal tear' factsheet which can be found on our website: [www.uhs.nhs.uk/Media/UHS-website-2019/Patientinformation/Pregnancyandbirth/Information-and-advice-if-you-have-had-a-third-or-fourth-degree-perineal-tear-1050-PIL.pdf](http://www.uhs.nhs.uk/Media/UHS-website-2019/Patientinformation/Pregnancyandbirth/Information-and-advice-if-you-have-had-a-third-or-fourth-degree-perineal-tear-1050-PIL.pdf)

We invite all women who have experienced a 3b, 3c or fourth degree tear for a follow-up appointment in this clinic approximately six months after giving birth.

### How should I prepare for the appointment?

No preparation is needed for the appointment.

### Who will I see at the appointment?

At the appointment you will see a consultant in obstetrics and gynaecology (a doctor who specialises in both care during pregnancy, labour and after birth and conditions relating to women's reproductive health).

### What will happen at the appointment?

During your appointment, we will discuss the birth of your baby with you. We will also ask if you have been having any symptoms related to the tear. This is a good opportunity for you to ask any questions or discuss any concerns that you may have.

We will then offer you two procedures to check how well your perineal muscles have healed and how well the muscles around your back passage are functioning. These procedures include:

- an endoanal scan
- an anorectal pressure test

Please note that for both the endoanal scan and the anorectal pressure test, a healthcare assistant will also be in the clinic room with you to provide support and act as a 'chaperone', as well as to assist the consultant. You are also welcome to bring **one** person with you for support if you wish.

## Endoanal scan

An endoanal scan, also known as an endoanal ultrasound scan, uses high-frequency sound waves to create an image of the muscles in your back passage.

We will perform your scan in a quiet and private room. We will ask you to lie on your left side for the scan. We will then gently insert a narrow device (about as wide as a finger), known as an ultrasound probe, two centimetres into your back passage. This will allow us to see and take images of the ring of muscles around your anus, making it easier to identify if there are any defects in the muscles.

The test will take a couple of minutes.

Please be aware that any images we take will be stored as part of your confidential electronic UHS medical record.

## Anorectal pressure test

An anorectal pressure test helps us to see how your anal sphincter muscles are working.

For this test, we will ask you to lie on your left side. We will then insert a small probe into your anus. We will ask you to squeeze the muscles around your back passage.

The test will take a couple of minutes.

Please note that although both the endoanal scan and the anorectal pressure test can be performed while you have your period, we understand that some women may be uncomfortable with this and may wish to rearrange their appointment. If this is the case, please call us on **023 8120 6699** to rearrange your appointment.

## How long will the appointment take?

The appointment will last approximately 30 minutes.

## Are there any risks?

Both the scan and the test are safe procedures.

Both procedures can be slightly uncomfortable but should not be painful. If you find the scan or test too uncomfortable, please let us know and we can stop the procedure at any time.

All the equipment we use for these procedures is latex-free.

## When will I get the results?

After you have had your endoanal scan and anorectal pressure test, the consultant will discuss the results with you. The results will help:

- guide the discussions you have with the consultant regarding possible future treatments
- you to make a decision about how you would like to deliver any babies you may have in the future (for example, a vaginal or caesarean birth)

This is a good opportunity for you to ask any questions that you may have.

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## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

Women's health physiotherapy team

Telephone: **023 8120 8829** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm)

To cancel or rearrange your appointment, please call the outpatient department on:

**023 8120 6699** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm).

## Useful links

[www.uhs.nhs.uk/Media/UHS-website-2019/Patientinformation/Womenshealth/Pelvic-floor-muscle-exercise-sheet-689-PIL.pdf](http://www.uhs.nhs.uk/Media/UHS-website-2019/Patientinformation/Womenshealth/Pelvic-floor-muscle-exercise-sheet-689-PIL.pdf)

[www.uhs.nhs.uk/Media/UHS-website-2019/Patientinformation/Pregnancyandbirth/Information-and-advice-if-you-have-had-a-third-or-fourth-degree-perineal-tear-1050-PIL.pdf](http://www.uhs.nhs.uk/Media/UHS-website-2019/Patientinformation/Pregnancyandbirth/Information-and-advice-if-you-have-had-a-third-or-fourth-degree-perineal-tear-1050-PIL.pdf)

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For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**

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