

Care of Perineal Tears and/or Sutures

If your tear has been repaired, it can take multiple weeks for the sutures to fully dissolve. Vaginal tissue heals very quickly, so if you notice bits of suture material in the toilet or on your pad after a week or two, that is ok. Not all tears need to be sutured. The following suggestions will help your tear to heal:

- Use your peri-bottle every time you use the washroom. Fill it with warm water. Optional to add a dropper of calendula tincture or unscented Epsom salts. Use all the water in the bottle and spray from front to back. Do this for the first week.
- **KEEP YOUR LEGS TOGETHER!** The tissue in and around your vagina is delicate. It is easy to pull the sutures out by squatting or sitting with your legs apart. Rest as much as possible in the first week.
- Stay in bed for the first three days after your birth. Get up to use the washroom and sit at the table for meals. Your main job is to nurse your baby and rest. Have family and friends cook meals, clean and help with other children.
- If your bottom is swollen, place ice packs against it for the first 24 hours. To make ice pads, cut a maxi pad in half, fill your peri-bottle full of water and a dropper full of calendula, and then spray the tops of the pads until they are damp. Place these pads in your freezer and change them when you are up to the washroom.
- Starting on the second day postpartum you may want to soak your bottom in a clean bathtub. Fill the tub with 6 inches of warm water. You can add Epsom salts, calendula tincture, tea tree oil, or comfrey tea to your sitz bath.
- After your sitz bath use a hair dryer to gently dry your sutures. The warm air will bring circulation to the area and help keep it dry.
- Arnica homeopathic remedy 200c, 4 times a day will help reduce swelling and bruising and promote tissue healing if you are interested in using homeopathy.
- Nutrition is important for healing. Eat lots of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, varied sources of protein and drink lots of water. Additional Vitamin C with bioflavonoids can prevent infection.
- Vaginal rest (no tampons or sexual intercourse) for at least 6 weeks postpartum to allow your perineum to heal.
- For long term good bladder and bowel function it is important to do your best to encourage healing. Remember your sutures cannot be replaced if they rip out unless the tear is recut.
- Whether you have a tear or not, your body and your pelvic floor need time to heal and rest. Avoid stairs as much as possible in the first week. If you have stairs try to only do them as much as your baby is old (ie. day 1 only up and down 1 time). We expect you be home for the first week with your feet up. This means minimal to no household duties, no grocery shopping or wandering Walmart. Your pelvic floor will thank you.