



PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

PERINEAL CLINIC

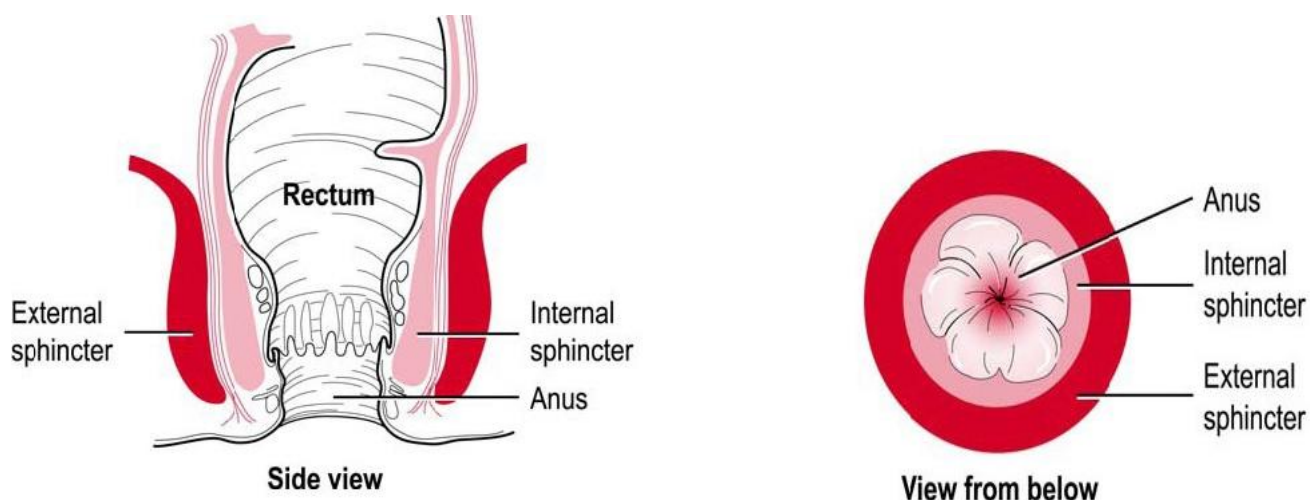
What is the Perineal Clinic?

The Perineal Clinical is a clinic for those who have had a tear of the anal sphincter (a group of muscles at the end of the rectum surrounding the anus) during the delivery of their baby. Referral to the clinic is made automatically at the time of delivery by the Midwife. The purpose of the clinic is to identify and investigate any problems you may have or develop. You will likely have an appointment to assess the muscles in the back passage, then an appointment with a doctor. This may be on the same day, or at a separate appointment.

What is an anal sphincter tear?

During the delivery of your baby, a tear can occur from the vagina through the tissue towards the back passage. The muscles in the back passage can be damaged. This is called a third-degree tear. The tear is repaired immediately after delivery.

What are the anal sphincter muscles?



The anus is surrounded by two sphincter muscles which keep the back passage closed and maintain continence. The inner ring, called the internal anal sphincter, keeps the anus closed and automatically opens when you need to open your bowels. The outer ring, called the external anal sphincter, allows you to decide when to do this, as you can squeeze it together to stop your bowels emptying.

Can a third-degree tear cause a problem with bowel control?

Damage to the anal sphincter muscles is the most common cause of bowel control difficulties. Faecal incontinence is the inability to control the passage of bowel contents (stool). It may be in the form of a leak that you do not know is happening, or with extreme urgency to get to the toilet, with accidents if the toilet is not reached in time. There can also be an embarrassing inability to control the passage of wind.

How can the Sphincter muscle damage be assessed?

A detailed questionnaire is enclosed with your appointment. The completed questionnaire will provide lots of information for the doctor who will discuss it with you. The doctor will also discuss whether or not any further investigations are needed.

The sphincter muscles can be examined by doing the following investigations:

1. **Anorectal Physiology Studies:** A thin catheter (like a tube) with a tiny balloon on the end is placed into the back passage to measure the strength of the muscles. A small amount of water is passed through the catheter to allow us to measure the muscle strength. You may be aware of the water, and you should not worry. You will be asked to do some squeezes and coughs with the catheter in place.
2. **Endoanal Ultrasound Scan:** A scan probe is placed inside the back passage to see what the muscles look like and pictures are taken. You will just be aware of the probe inside the back passage, but you should not feel any pain or discomfort.

There is an information video available online “Care following your third- or fourth-degree tear” – please follow the link below: https://mft.nhs.uk/saint-marys/patients-visitors/patient-leaflets/?pl_category_id=28

What happens next?

The results of the tests will be discussed with you by a doctor and necessary treatment will be arranged.

If you require any further information or clarification, including clarification of terminology, please do not hesitate to talk to one of the doctors or nurses, who will be happy to discuss your concerns with you.

CONTACT DETAILS



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