

SEVERE (THIRD AND FOURTH DEGREE) PERINEAL TEARS CLINICAL CARE STANDARD

Fact Sheet for Clinicians

Quality Statement 1: Information, shared decision making and informed consent

Beginning in the antenatal period, a woman receives individualised information about the potential for severe perineal tears and is supported to make decisions and provide informed consent for the care she receives.

Quality Statement 2: Reducing risk during pregnancy, labour and birth

A woman receives care during pregnancy, labour and birth to reduce her risk of severe perineal tears. Care is aligned with evidence-based guidelines and reflects the woman's care preferences.

Quality Statement 3: Instrumental vaginal birth

When intervention is necessary for the safe birth of the baby, the choice of instrument is based on clinical need and consideration of the benefits and risks for each option, including the risk of severe perineal tear.

Quality Statement 4: Identifying third and fourth degree perineal tears

After a vaginal birth, and with her consent, a woman is examined by an appropriately trained clinician to exclude the possibility of a third or fourth degree perineal tear. Tears are classified using the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists classification and are documented in the healthcare record.

Quality Statement 5: Repairing third and fourth degree perineal tears

When a third or fourth degree perineal tear occurs, it is promptly repaired by an appropriately trained and experienced clinician in a suitable environment.

Quality Statement 6: Postoperative care

After repair of a severe perineal tear, a woman receives postoperative care that includes debriefing, physiotherapy and psychosocial support before discharge.

Quality Statement 7: Follow-up care

A woman with a severe perineal tear receives individualised follow-up care and appropriate referral to optimise her ongoing physical, emotional, psychological and sexual health.



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The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care has produced this clinical care standard to support the delivery of appropriate care for a defined condition. The clinical care standard is based on the best evidence available at the time of development. Healthcare professionals are advised to use clinical discretion and consideration of the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or their carer or guardian, when applying information in the clinical care standard. Consumers should use the clinical care standard as a guide to inform discussions with their healthcare professionals about the applicability of the clinical care standard to their individual condition.

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