

## Pelvic Health

# Information for women following 3rd or 4th degree tear

In healthy adult women the most common cause of problems with bowel control is damage to the muscles in that area during childbirth. Typical symptoms that might be experienced are: poor control of wind, needing to get to the toilet very quickly and leakage of bowel motion.

Symptoms can be mild, moderate or severe and may start soon after the birth. Some women however, do not develop symptoms until much later in life. This is because muscles and other tissues in that area tend to get weaker as we get older. It is therefore a good idea to get the muscles stronger now.

If the muscles and other tissues are strong this may reduce or prevent problems later.

Follow the advice on pelvic floor muscle exercises in your Fit for the Future leaflet. If you have not been given a copy ask your midwife, or ring the Pelvic Health Physiotherapy Department (details below) who will be happy to send one to you.

### **Other suggestions that might help:**

- ★ It is important to have firm but soft stools. Loose stools are more difficult to control and hard stools can be painful and cause more damage. A varied and healthy diet including plenty of fluids is recommended.
- ★ Supporting the area with a maternity pad and your hand at the same time as you open your bowels can help. Hold the pad over your vagina, with your finger tips on the area of skin between your vagina and back passage. As you open your bowels apply a little pressure up through the pad.
- ★ In addition, it may help to put your feet on a small footstool when you are sitting on the toilet.

If you have any concerns, please contact the Physiotherapy Department between 8.00am and 4.00pm Monday to Friday on 01274 364250. An answer phone is available 24 hours. You can contact us using the Relay UK app. Textphone users will need to dial 18001 01274 364250.

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is a smoke-free organisation. You are not permitted to smoke or use e-cigarettes in any of the hospital buildings or grounds.

If you need this information in another format or language, please ask a member of staff to arrange this for you.