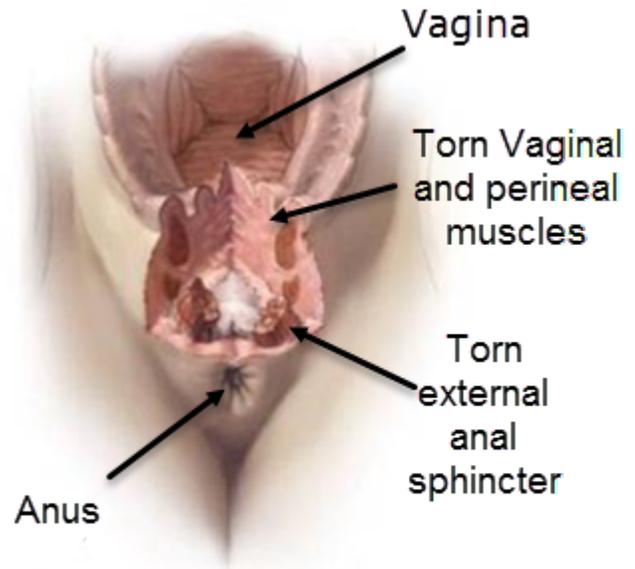


# Third Degree Laceration

## What is a Third Degree Laceration?

A third-degree laceration is a tear in the vagina, the skin and involves the muscles between the vagina and anus (perineal skin and perineal muscles), and the anal sphincter (the muscle that surrounds your anus). The anal sphincter consists of two separate muscles. These muscles are called the internal anal sphincter and the external anal sphincter. The tear can be through one or both of these muscles.



© Corton. Randomized trial of stirrups delivery. *Am J Obstet Gynecol* 2012.

## Sutures

Sutures help to hold the tear together to allow it to heal. The sutures will dissolve on their own in a few weeks. You will not need to return to the doctor's office to have the sutures taken out.

## What can I do about pain or discomfort?

If you have pain or discomfort you can try sitting in a bath tub of warm water or using a sitz bath. Over the counter Tylenol® or Motrin® may also help.

## What happens with the next baby?

If you have a third degree tear with your first baby, you have a 3% - 5% chance of having another tear with your next baby. As long as you are not losing gas or

stool after having the baby, you should be able to deliver naturally with your next baby.

If you are losing gas or stool after having your baby but it stops over time, it is a good idea to discuss with your doctor your options when you have another baby.

If you continue to lose gas or stool after having your baby, your health care provider may recommend a cesarean (C-section) for your next baby.

Illustration: Am J Obstet Gynecol. 2012 Aug; 207(2): 133.e1–133.e5. Published online 2012 Jun 23. doi: [10.1016/j.ajog.2012.06.043](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajog.2012.06.043)

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