



ALTERNATIVES TO SUTURING



Alternatives to Suturing

Women who sustain a second degree tear will be offered sutures if a medical professional is in attendance or attends after birth.

Some women may choose not to have stitches for a second degree tear and wish to use alternative methods to promote healing instead. The following slides will look at possible alternatives to sutures.



Seaweed

- Seaweed is an alternative used for wound healing. Dulse seaweed is popular.
- Apply a piece of seaweed, soaked in sterile water, larger than the wound area bringing the edges of the wound together.
- Add a second piece of seaweed, larger than the first over the top.
- Hold in place with an organic cotton or sterile sanitary pad.
- Change the second piece of seaweed regularly after using the bathroom
- <https://www.midwiferytoday.com/mt-articles/natural-alternative-suturing/>





Manuka Honey

High grade manuka honey has excellent wound healing properties. Honey has antibacterial, antifungal and anti- microbial properties. It has been used in wound healing for centuries.

It can be applied directly to the wound and the covered with a sterile gauze and sanitary pad. Honey can be reapplied after washing or using the bathroom.






Links to articles

Manuka honey: A promising wound dressing material for the chronic nonhealing discharging wounds: A retrospective study

Honey has sweet potential for wound healing, argue scientists

Application of Honey to Reduce Perineal Laceration Pain during the Postpartum Period: A Randomized Controlled Trial



Witch hazel pads with aloe vera (Padcicles)

- Add witch hazel to cotton organic pads and freeze in preparation for birth.

- After birth remove from the freezer and apply aloe vera before wearing the pad. (Lavender essential oil can also be added)

- Aloe Vera is a natural anti-inflammatory and has antimicrobial properties to help prevent infection.



Sitz baths

A sitz bath can be used immediately after birth using a sitz bath that fits in your toilet or taking a very shallow bath. Herbs can also be added to the water. There are lots of great blends out there specifically for this use. These blends contain plants with antiseptic and soothing properties to relieve pain, decrease risk of infection and promote healing. Good herbs to use include: calendula, witch hazel, comfrey, lavender flowers, yarrow and sea salt. Bring about a handful of your blend to a simmer for 10 minutes or so, strain and use. Be sure the water isn't too hot. Dilute with a bit of cooler water as needed. This can be done multiple times per day as needed. Alternatively adding diluted essential oils such as lavender and tea tree oil to the water will also provide comfort. After bathing pat dry the area and apply clean pads if required.



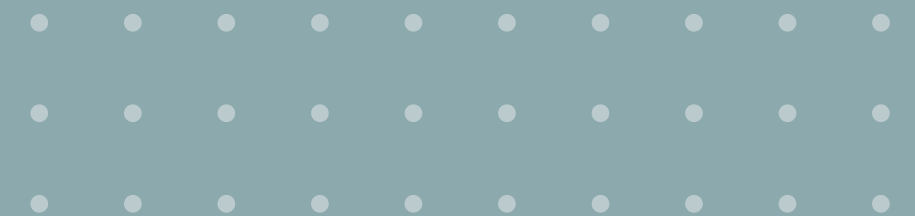
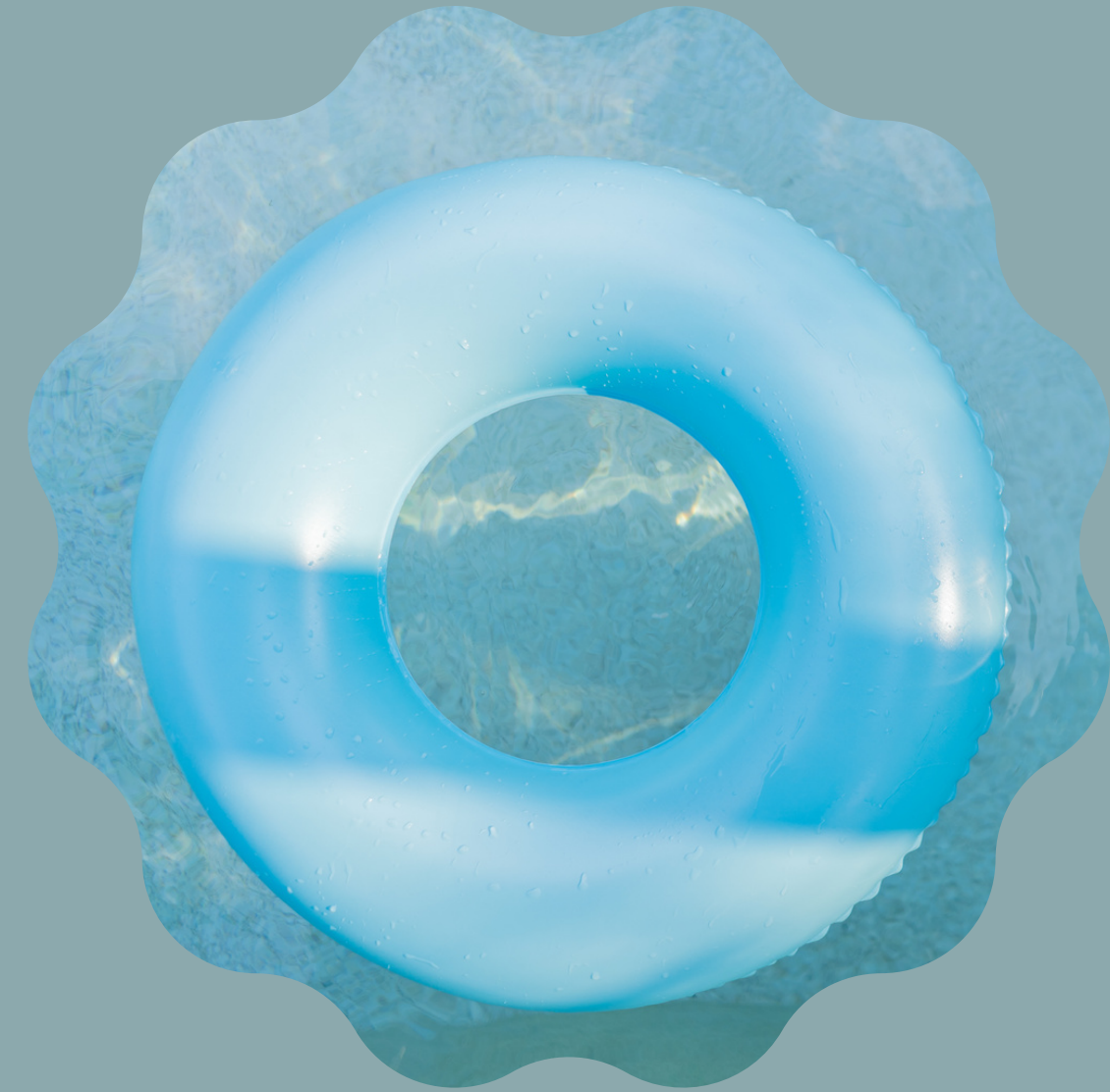
Sitting comfortably

- Sitting on a cushion or ring can help initially. Sitting on a ring is not advised for long periods of time.

- Resting is important, lying down, side lying with a pillow in-between the knees can reduce pressure on perineum

- Standing or sitting for extended periods is not recommended especially in the first couple of weeks after birth.

- If you're breast feeding explore positions that don't require sitting to feed baby.





Things to consider

However a woman chooses to repair any vaginal tearing after childbirth the following is really important:

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Good Hygiene – Keeping the area clean and dry to prevent infection. Clean after using the toilet with clean water. Allow some time during the day for air to get to the area. Sitting on an old towel without pants on will promote healing. Cotton pants. Washing hands before and after changing pads.

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Rest – Allowing time for the body to heal and recover from birth. No heavy lifting, keeping legs together as much as possible to allow the tissues to heal, especially when getting in and out of bed.

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Nutrition and hydration – Nutrient rich foods should be offered to help promote healing whilst considering dietary preferences. Adequate hydration is essential, breastfeeding mothers especially will need to maintain a good fluid intake. It's important to try and avoid constipation.



Signs of Infection

If there are any signs of infection professional advice should be considered; especially if symptoms are worsening or a high temperature is present!



Heat, swelling, redness

Symptoms should begin to reduce after birth, if swelling and redness increase it could be a sign of infection

Puss or discharge from the wound

Monitor the wound area for signs of discharge

Offensive odour

If the wound or vaginal discharge is offensive smelling it can be a sign of infection

Feeling unwell

Fever or feeling unwell can indicate infection

Severe pain

Worsening pain in the perineal area should be addressed

