



Episiotomy, childbirth, and vaginal tightening

Question

Dear Alice,

This might be a strange question, but I've heard that after delivering a child, if an episiotomy is done, the doctor can "cinch" the vagina up a little (so the opening is tighter during sex). Am I up in the night, or is this an option? I would be really interested to know. Thanks so much!

bj

Answer

Dear bj,

An episiotomy is a surgical procedure that enlarges the vaginal opening to aid in the delivery of a baby. It is common for a woman's vagina to tear during their baby's birth, although not all women do. In both cases, the woman will be cinched or sewn up using stitches — and yes, perhaps an additional stitch or two can be added for vaginal tightening.

Keep in mind, an extra stitch is not needed, especially if the woman has done Kegel exercises throughout her pregnancy. Doing Kegel exercises regularly can strengthen a woman's vaginal muscles, better prepare her for childbearing, and improve bladder control. In addition, Kegels can help intensify orgasms, and whip pelvic muscles back into shape more quickly after delivery.

If you are concerned about episiotomy or vaginal tightening, it is best to speak with a health care provider — preferably *before* a woman goes into labor. This way, a decision can be made based on both personal preference and medical expertise.

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