

Trust Headquarters
Russells Hall Hospital
Dudley
West Midlands
DY1 2HQ

Ref: FOI-072025-0001721

Date: 15.7.25

Address / Email:

Dear

Request Under Freedom of Information Act 2000

Thank you for requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, please see response below.

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding current clinical practices for perineal wound care at your Trust. This information is being collected to better understand the variation in perineal wound care across NHS Trusts in England, and will contribute to a broader understanding of current clinical approaches across NHS Trusts in England, both during and after childbirth.

We would be grateful if you could provide responses to the following questions:

1a. What solution is used to cleanse the vulvo-vaginal area when a spontaneous vaginal delivery is imminent?

There is no routine cleansing of the vulvo-vaginal area specified prior to a spontaneous vaginal birth unless clinically indicated (e.g., visible soiling or infection risk). In such cases, tap water or warm sterile water may be used.

1b. What solution is used to cleanse the vulvo-vaginal area when an instrumental delivery (e.g., forceps or vacuum) is planned or imminent?

There is no routine cleansing of the vulvo-vaginal area specified prior to an assisted birth unless clinically indicated (e.g., visible soiling or infection risk). In such cases, tap water or warm sterile water may be used.

2. In the event of an episiotomy during a spontaneous vaginal birth, what cleansing solution is used immediately beforehand?

A cleansing solution is not routinely used prior to episiotomy. However, if the perineal area is visibly soiled, it is cleansed with sterile water to ensure a clean field for the procedure.

3a. What cleansing solution is used prior to suturing following a spontaneous vaginal birth?

Before perineal suturing, aseptic technique is maintained. The area is cleaned using sterile water.

3b. What cleansing solution is used prior to suturing following an instrumental vaginal birth?

Similar to spontaneous births, the area is prepared using sterile water to ensure a clean field for suturing, particularly where there is increased trauma or ongoing bleeding.

4. What cleansing solution is used after suturing is completed, and is this different following spontaneous or instrumental births?

Following suturing, gentle cleansing with sterile water is performed to remove residual blood. The approach is consistent for both spontaneous and instrumental births. No other cleaning solution is used.

5. Does your Trust recommend or routinely use any specific topical product(s) (e.g., medical-grade honey, Flaminal, or similar) for the care of perineal trauma?

Currently, the Trust does not routinely recommend or use specific topical products for the care of perineal trauma.

6. Does your Trust routinely collect data on the number of women who are referred back into services due to perineal wound concerns (excluding routine OASI follow-up)?

Our Trust records reasons for attendance at the maternity triage department using the BSOTS (Birmingham Symptom-specific Obstetric Triage System) proforma. Women may self-refer postnatally with concerns or be referred into triage by their GP, up to six weeks after birth.

This documentation enables the identification and extraction of data on women who attend with perineal wound concerns.

Additionally, referrals related to third- and fourth-degree tears are recorded via the Trust's incident reporting system.

7. If your Trust offers a perineal wound clinic, which products—if any—are recommended to support wound healing?

The Trust does not currently offer a dedicated perineal wound clinic, therefore, this question is not applicable.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you have the right to appeal in line with guidance from the Information Commissioner. In the first instance you may contact the Information Governance Manager of the Trust.

Information Governance Manager
Trust Headquarters
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Should you disagree with the contents of our response to your appeal, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioners Office at.

Information Commissioners Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 0303 123 1113
www.ico.org.uk

If you require further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

**Freedom of Information Team
The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust**