

The perineum, a part of which extends from the lower part of the opening of the vagina, backwards towards the rectum, is sometimes torn when the child is of an unusual size, or the parts are particularly unyielding. The doctor in attendance often puts in a few stitches at the time to repair the breach. If for any reason he thinks it best not to do so immediately, he will probably take advantage of the earliest opportunity to perform the operation. It is a comparatively slight one, and if left undone gives rise to unpleasant results. The perineum in women helps to support the vagina, uterus and bladder. Its rupture permits their displacement and causes much discomfort—sometimes serious inconvenience and suffering.

Close to the upper part of the opening of the vagina, outside, is a tiny orifice, the mouth of the urethra, or passage leading to the bladder. This canal is about an inch and a half long. After childbirth it is sometimes necessary to draw the water for a day or two, the mother having temporarily lost the power of passing it herself. This is not a formidable operation, and usually gives little, sometimes no, pain. A catheter, a flexible tube of rubber, or one of glass, made for the purpose, is gently inserted in the urethra and pushed on until it enters the bladder, when the water flows out through it.