

There are an array of Health Professionals who can assist in diagnosis and provide treatment for the management of birth trauma. This guide aims to identify the different types of providers and explain their role in the care of a woman who has experienced physical injury as a result of their birth experience.

The intention of providing this information is to provide women and families with a basic knowledge of what is available so they can be an active participant in the decision making process for their care. We encourage women to ask questions, source quality information, seek second opinions and trust their intuition when navigating their post trauma treatment options.

This can be a roller coaster journey so the support of family and friends during this time is important.



PHYSICAL TRAUMA

PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA



GENERAL PRACTITIONER (GP) A GP is often a woman's first point of care. There are three main roles of a GP:

Assessment

The GP should be asking the woman post birth about their experience both physically and psychologically.

Referral

The GP should be referring the woman to appropriate specialists for further assessment and investigation of treatment options.

Coordination

The GP should be checking in with the patient, as well as other professionals (if a multidisciplinary care team is involved) to support the patient and their family.

Some tips when seeing a GP

It is important to ask your GP whether you qualify for a chronic disease management plan as this may assist with the financial cost of care.

Book a double appointment so you have the time to cover what you need to discuss. If you are taking your baby with you to the check up, they will often spend most of the time checking the baby's health and not much time on your health.

Pelvic Health Physiotherapist

Pelvic Health Physiotherapy is a specialisation of the physiotherapy profession focusing specifically on the pelvic health of women, men and children. They generally use a combination of verbal assessment, ultrasound and internal examination to diagnose pelvic floor dysfunction or injury.

Their patients may be experiencing issues such as incontinence, prolapse, constipation, bed wetting, pre and post-operative care for pelvic or prostate surgery, pelvic and perineal pain, pudendal neuralgia, bladder pain, vulvar pain and vaginismus. Pelvic Floor Physiotherapists are interested in muscle strengthening or relaxation and stretching (as appropriate), bladder and bowel function and pain control strategies.

Gynaecologist

Gynecologists are doctors who specialise in the health of the female reproductive system. They treat issues such as breast problems, irregular menstrual period, cancers of the female organs.

Obstetrician

An obstetrician is a type of gynaecologist who specialises in pregnancy and childbirth.

OB/GYN

An OB/GYN specialist is trained in and practices both obstetrics and gynaecology.

Urogynaecologist

A urogynaecologist is a doctor with specialised training in urology, gynaecology and obstetrics who focuses on the evaluation and treatment of conditions concerning the female pelvic organs and their supporting muscles and tissues, as well as pelvic reconstructive surgery.

Colorectal Surgeon

A colorectal surgeon is a surgeon who specialises in the management of disorders of the small bowel, colon, rectum and anus. A woman may be referred to colorectal surgeon for the treatment of anorectal conditions including haemorrhoids, fissures, abscesses and fistulas, pelvic floor disorders including bowel prolapse or functional bowel problems such as constipation and incontinence.

Perinatal Psychologist

Psychologists provide specialist psycho-social assessment and treatment of birth trauma, including talk therapy to assist in the processing of the trauma. They may use techniques specific to trauma/fear/anxiety/PTSD to address and help relieve the psychological symptoms that can accompany birth trauma.

Psychiatrist

Psychiatrists carry out psychiatric assessments and administer medications to help relieve the psychological symptoms that can accompany birth trauma, including PTSD. They also work to support a secure attachment between the woman and her infant.

Social Worker

The main role of a social worker is to help advocate on behalf of the woman/family. They may do this by assisting them with accessing services, facilitating group or individual therapeutic intervention and addressing external factors impacting the woman's well-being.

Mental Health Nurse

Mental health nurses are nurses who have undertaken further training to care for people with mental health conditions. They may form part of a perinatal mental health service within a hospital or private practice. Mental health nurses can provide you with information about mental health conditions and support your treatment and recovery by collaborating with your GP, psychiatrist or other health professionals.

Child Health Nurse

A child health nurse focuses on the health and well-being of mother and baby, including babies weight and "thriving". They will focus on adequate nutrition of mother and baby and also psycho-social assessments to monitor a mother's mental health. A child health nurse will refer the mother to mental health providers where necessary.

There is comfort in knowing you are not alone.

Peer Support Service

A peer support service such as ABTA's Facebook Support Group or P2P Support Service can provide you with a safe space to share your concerns and receive non-judgmental support from others who have been on a similar journey.

Don't forget your mental health

It is important to remember that the journey of physical healing may also be challenging mentally. If you are finding it difficult, a Peer Support service such as ABTA's Facebook Support Group and P2P Support Program can provide you with a safe space to share your concerns and receive non-judgmental support from others who have been on a similar journey. You can also talk to your GP about a mental health plan to help you address these issues.

Information shared is designed to support, not replace, the relationship that exists between you and your health professional/s. To find more resources, support and guidance visit our website.