

Cervical Suture

Patient Information

What is a cervical stitch?

A cervical stitch (also called a cervical suture or cerclage) is a strong stitch put around the cervix (the opening to the womb).

It is usually done during pregnancy between **12 and 24 weeks**.

Why might I need one?

You might need a cervical stitch if your cervix is opening too early.

This can increase the chance of:

- **Late miscarriage**, or
- **Premature birth** (when a baby is born too early).

The stitch helps **keep the cervix closed**, which may help your baby stay inside the womb longer.

How is the stitch put in?

- You will have the stitch put in at a hospital.
- You will have an **anaesthetic** (medicine to stop pain). You might:
 - » Be **awake but numb** from the waist down (spinal anaesthetic), or
 - » Be **asleep** (general anaesthetic).
- You will not be able to eat or drink for **4 to 6 hours** before the operation.
- The doctor uses a tool called a **speculum** to see your cervix and place the stitch.
- The operation takes about 30 minutes.
- You may get:
 - » **Antibiotics** (to prevent infection),
 - » **Pain relief**, and
 - » **Medication** to stop contractions.
- You may have a **bladder tube (catheter)** until you can go to the toilet by yourself.

Most people go home after **1 to 2 days**.

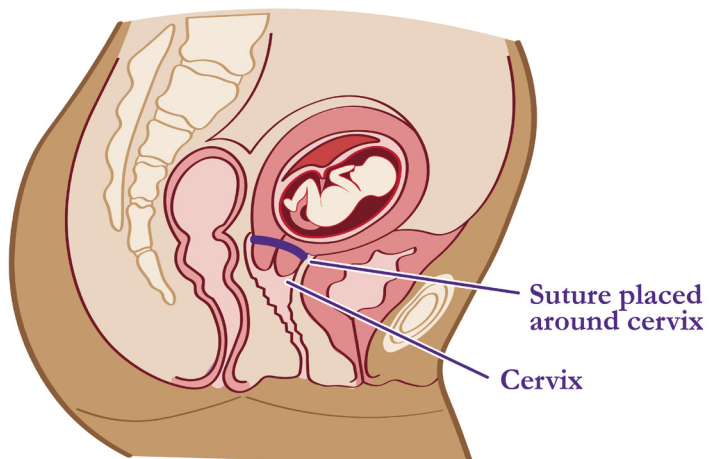


Diagram showing the cervix and where the cervical suture is placed (NHS 2024)

What happens after the stitch is in?

- You may have some **bleeding** like a period. It should turn brown after a day or two.
- You may feel **cramping or pain** in your tummy or vagina.
 - » Pain relief like **paracetamol** can help.
- **Sex is not recommended** while the stitch is in.
- Ask your doctor about what work and activities are safe for you.

When is the stitch removed?

- The stitch is usually removed at **36 to 37 weeks of pregnancy** (unless labour starts earlier).
- It's taken out at hospital using a speculum.
- Most people **do not need anaesthetic** and it only takes a few minutes.
- If needed, it can be removed with anaesthetic in an operating room.
- If you think **labour has started**, contact the hospital straight away.
- **The stitch must be removed before giving birth** to avoid harm to the cervix.

When should I get help?

Call the hospital straight away if you have:

- **Contractions** or strong tummy cramps,
- **Bleeding from your vagina**,
- **Waters breaking** (fluid leaking from your vagina),
- **Smelly or unusual discharge** from your vagina.



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