

Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy for Females

Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy

You have been referred for pelvic floor physical therapy. The physical therapist you will work with specializes in the pelvic floor. Pelvic floor therapists are trained to be sensitive to the personal nature of these topics and this part of your body.

Conditions Treated by a Pelvic Floor Therapist Include:

- Bladder urgency (sudden need to use the bathroom)
- Bladder frequency (using the bathroom often) and unplanned loss of urine
- Unplanned loss of stool or constipation (straining or infrequent bowel movements)
- Pelvic organ prolapse (dropping or bulging of the bladder, uterus, rectum or other organs)
- Pelvic pain, including pain with intercourse
- Pregnancy & postpartum issues
- After pelvic surgery or pelvic radiation

What are my pelvic floor muscles?

In women, the pelvic floor is made up of muscles, ligaments, tissues and nerves. They support the bladder, uterus, vagina and rectum. The pelvic floor assists in bladder and bowel control. It aids in sexual performance (orgasm) and gives stability to the pelvis.

What to expect at the first appointment:

The first appointment will start by talking with the therapist about your symptoms. You will be asked about your bladder, bowel function, health history and lifestyle.

Exam

The therapist will perform an exam of your pelvic muscles. This is usually done internally (inside the vagina). They will gently feel the different pelvic muscles with a gloved finger. This is done to check for any pain or muscle tightness. They will also check how well you can squeeze and relax these muscles. This exam may also include biofeedback. This is where a computer is used to see how well you can tighten and relax your muscles. Together, you and your therapist will decide which exam is best for you. The therapist may also examine your back and hip motion, muscle strength, posture and balance. These areas are linked to your pelvis and can relate to your symptoms.

Treatment Plan

Your therapist will come up with a treatment plan based on exam results. The plan may include:

- A home exercise program adapted to your specific needs.
- Hands on therapy to your spine, hips and/or pelvic floor muscles in the clinic.

- Educational tools which may include biofeedback to increase your awareness and function of the pelvic muscles.

Your therapist will work with you to set goals for treatment. They will work with your doctor if any issues or symptoms remain.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 3/2019 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#8079