

## The Pelvic Floor

The pelvic floor consists of 3 layers of muscles & other tissues that attach to the pelvis. These muscles stretch like a hammock from the pubic bone anteriorly to the tailbone posteriorly, & also from each side. The pelvic floor muscles, along with other muscles of your core & legs, play a role in controlling the flow of urine, bowel movements, sexual function, supporting your internal organs, managing internal pressure, posture, breathing, & stability.

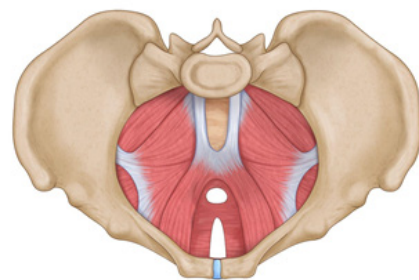
# WOMEN'S PELVIC FLOOR PROGRAM



## Pelvic Floor Dysfunction

Pelvic floor dysfunction describes a problem with the muscles of the pelvic floor. Muscles that are weak or tight can result in symptoms including incontinence, pain, or changes in urinary or bowel habits. Sometimes a patient will only have one of these symptoms, or multiple symptoms at the same time.

- Urinary Incontinence
- Overactive Bladder
- Painful Bladder
- Constipation
- Fecal Incontinence
- Pelvic Organ Prolapse
- Urinary Hesitancy
- Urinary Urgency
- Urinary Frequency
- Pelvic Pain
- Painful Intercourse
- Painful Menses



## Contributing Factors

Factors that can contribute to pelvic floor dysfunction include obesity, tobacco use, surgery, radiation, genetics, traumatic injuries to the pelvic area or repeated straining (such as with heavy lifting, a chronic cough, or during a bowel movement). Hormonal imbalances such as decreased estrogen, as well as pregnancy related changes, straining during childbirth or damage to the pelvic floor during childbirth can also contribute to pelvic floor dysfunction.

## Pelvic Floor Dysfunction for Women

At your first appointment, your therapist will do an assessment before deciding what treatment plan will be the most beneficial for you. This will include a detailed history, current symptoms, & concerns you are having related to the pelvic floor. This assessment may include an evaluation of the muscles both internally & externally that affect your pelvic floor, including your core, lower extremities, & pelvis. Your therapist will likely assess your flexibility, posture, breathing patterns, & gait pattern. After your evaluation, you will work together with your therapist to determine the best treatment plan for your specific symptoms & goals.



Please contact your physician and/or primary care provider for a referral to Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy.

## Outpatient Physical Therapy

Phone: 580.251.8460

Fax: 580.251.8979

## Physical Therapy Treatment

Pelvic floor physical therapy is done by specially trained physical therapists who are musculoskeletal experts in evaluating & treating problems with the pelvic floor. This therapy helps to address pain, weakness, & dysfunction to help relieve symptoms, & improve your quality of life. It is sometimes done as part of a comprehensive treatment plan involving a variety of team members including gynecologists, urologists, primary care physicians, sex therapists, or mental health professionals. The treatment will vary based off of each patient but can include the following:

- Education on pelvic anatomy & how these muscles affect your activities of daily life.
- Exercises to help strengthen weak muscles, stretch tight muscles, improve coordination, & manage internal pressure such as when you cough, sneeze or laugh.
- Manual therapy techniques such as stretching, myofascial release, joint mobilizations, or trigger point therapy to help with pain management, flexibility, posture & blood circulation.
- Modalities can include electrical stimulation to help teach patients how to coordinate the muscles of the pelvic floor. It can also include biofeedback to help patients visualize their pelvic floor muscles working while working to improve voluntary control & activation.
- Vaginal dilators can be utilized to help with overactive pelvic floor muscles to assist with relaxing the pelvic floor & allow for easier penetration, such as for tampon usage, gynecological exams, or sexual activity.

