

PELVIC MUSCLE FUNCTION AND CONTINENCE PROGRAM

The pelvic floor is a collection of muscles (and ligaments and connective tissue), wrapping down from the front of the pelvis to the back, that holds the organs and structures of the lower abdomen in place and affects urologic, colorectal, and sexual function. For conditions related to the pelvic floor, The Center for Gynecology and Women's Health at Frankford Hospitals provides a special Pelvic Muscle Function and Continence Program.



The Center for
Gynecology &
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AT FRANKFORD HOSPITALS

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Pelvic Muscle Function and Continence Program

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Frankford Hospitals
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The Center for
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Care Goals

When you have bladder or urination symptoms, or other signs related to a pelvic muscle condition, The Center for Gynecology and Women's Health at Frankford Hospitals can offer you a specially structured treatment program that reconditions the pelvic floor to improve its tone and function. Our dedicated staff of gynecologists and nurse practitioners has focused experience and resources for this care.

The Pelvic Muscle

The "pelvic muscle" supports, among other structures, the bladder, vagina, rectum, and urethra. Tension in this muscle that is too high or too low, or that is irregular or has lost its coordination, can lead to a variety of symptoms and conditions.

Causes of Pelvic Muscle Problems

- Childbirth
- High-impact activities
- Hereditary weakness
- Injury
- Surgery
- Constipation
- Muscle spasm

Symptoms of Pelvic Muscle Dysfunction

- Urinary leakage (also irregularities in bowel function)
- Pain in the pelvis, vagina, or back
- Vaginal prolapse or droppage
- Pain with intercourse

How it Affects Your Life

Women alter their lives to deal with pelvic muscle and continence problems. They may stop certain activities that they enjoy or wear sanitary pads or undergarments to avoid leakage. Their intimate relations may also suffer. With proper care, these problems can be easily corrected.

Common Pelvic Muscle and Continence Problems We Can Address:

Urinary leakage

This form of incontinence can affect women of any age, in different ways and circumstances. Something as simple as a trip to the bathroom, or even a cough, sneeze, or laugh, can cause leakage in women disposed to the problem. Urinary leakage is common, especially in those with pelvic muscle disorder.

Overactive bladder

This condition is defined as urinary frequency and urgency. Frequency means urinating more often than normal (e.g., more than eight times per day). Urgency means that the sensation of needing to urinate is an intense one, accompanied by the feeling of need for prompt release. Urinary leakage may also occur with these symptoms.

Vaginal prolapse

In some women, the vaginal wall pushes out of its normal position, sometimes entering or even dropping through the vagina. Displacement of the uterus, or sometimes of the rectum or bladder, into the vagina is usually the cause. Symptoms may be incontinence, pressure in the vagina, slow urinary stream, or the sensation in the vagina that something has "dropped down".



Pelvic pain

Pain in the pelvis in women can have many causes. It may be due to growths or changes within the pelvis, to chronic conditions causing such symptoms as inflammation, or intermittent events caused by muscle spasm or weakness. The pain may come and go or be nearly continuous. It may also be associated with events such as intercourse.

Sexual dysfunction

Pelvic floor disorder can make sexual intercourse difficult, due to vaginal pain or obstruction.

Pelvic Conditioning and Training

We use an established system of interventions that rehabilitate the pelvic floor, including:

- Pelvic muscle re-education
- Behavioral techniques
- Stimulation therapy

This program teaches women to normalize tension in, and regain control of, their pelvic muscle. It takes advantage of the most up-to-date and recently developed forms of exercise, biofeedback, and muscle stimulation. Through this approach, women achieve better bladder control, decreased muscle spasms, and better pelvic support.

Other Care

For conditions that we determine are not related to the pelvic muscle, or for pelvic muscle conditions that will not respond to conditioning and training alone, our full-service gynecologic group can offer other types of treatment. These include pessaries (devices to support the vagina), medications, or surgical interventions. We also provide knowledgeable referral to urologic and colorectal physicians or other specialists as needed.

First Visit

In the evaluation appointment for our Pelvic Muscle Function and Continence Program, patients receive:

- A physical examination that includes review of personal and family medical history
- Urine testing
- Muscle testing
- Education

Most forms of insurance cover these services.

After just a few visits for pelvic floor conditioning and training, most women with incontinence see an improvement in symptoms.