



Pelvic Floor Dysfunction

Pelvic floor dysfunction means the muscles and tissues that support your bladder, bowel, and reproductive organs are not working as they should. This can cause a range of symptoms that affect your daily life and comfort.

Symptoms:

- Trouble controlling urine (leaking or needing to go often)
- Trouble controlling bowel movements (leaking or constipation)
- Feeling of heaviness or bulging in the pelvis (pelvic organ prolapse)
- Pain in the pelvis, lower back, or during sex
- Difficulty starting or stopping urination or bowel movements

Diagnosis:

Your healthcare provider will ask about your symptoms and do a physical exam. Sometimes, special tests are needed, like:

- Urodynamic studies (to check bladder function)
- Anal manometry (to check bowel function)
- Imaging tests (ultrasound or MRI) to look at the pelvic floor muscles and organs

These tests help find out which part of the pelvic floor is causing problems and guide the best treatment plan.

Treatment:

Most people start with **conservative treatments**:

- **Pelvic floor physical therapy:** Special exercises to strengthen or relax the pelvic floor muscles, often taught by a trained therapist. This is safe, effective, and can help with leaking, prolapse, pain, and other symptoms.

- **Lifestyle changes:** Managing weight, avoiding constipation, and not straining during bowel movements.
- **Medications:** Sometimes used for bladder or bowel symptoms.
- **Devices:** Pessaries (small devices placed in the vagina) can help with prolapse or leaking.
- **Biofeedback and electrical stimulation:** These help you learn to control your pelvic muscles.

If these treatments do not help, surgery may be considered for severe prolapse or incontinence.

Pelvic floor dysfunction is common and treatable. Early diagnosis and starting physical therapy can greatly improve symptoms and quality of life.

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