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SIGNS OF A PELVIC FLOOR PROBLEM

What Women Should Know



WHAT IS THE PELVIC FLOOR?

The pelvic floor is a system of muscles, ligaments, and tissues that keep your pelvic organs firmly in place.

Think of it as the “hammock” of muscle that holds up your uterus, vagina, bladder, small intestine, and rectum against the force of gravity.

Women are particularly prone to developing pelvic floor problems—the strain of pregnancy and childbirth, and hormonal changes during menopause, can weaken these vital muscles, causing a range of symptoms.



PELVIC FLOOR PROBLEMS ARE COMMON

Pelvic floor disorders like prolapse—when the uterus, bladder, or other organ slips out of its normal position in the pelvis—are common.

In fact, **1 of every 11** women will need surgery to correct a pelvic floor disorder at some point in her life.¹ Nearly one in three will experience bladder leakage (urinary incontinence) at some point.

Ahead we'll look at 5 signs of a pelvic floor problem.

#1

Painful Sex

Painful sex is often caused by a prolapsed organ in the pelvis.

When an organ like the uterus or bladder slips down from its normal position and presses against the walls of the vagina it can make sex uncomfortable or painful.

Painful sex can also be caused by thinning of the tissues inside the vagina from hormonal changes during menopause.

#2

Leaking Urine

If you pee a little when you laugh, cough, sneeze, or strain, this is called stress urinary incontinence (UI), and it's a telltale sign of weak pelvic floor muscles.

Pregnancy, childbirth, menopause, and even certain sports and fitness regimens (e.g. CrossFit) can put your pelvic floor through the ringer.

UI is common, but it's not normal, and you don't have to accept it as a consequence of life—more ahead on what you can do to strengthen your pelvic floor to prevent bladder leakage.



Weak or damaged pelvic floor muscles impacts **1 in 3** women. Just because it is common does not mean we have to accept it.

#3

Bulging Feeling in the Vagina

This sensation is often a sign of a prolapsed uterus that has begun to slide down into the vagina.

Women report it as a strange feeling of heaviness, pulling, dragging, bulging, or dropping in the pelvis.

Uterine prolapse is categorized in 4 stages (in stage 1 the uterus has descended into the upper part of the vagina; in stage 4 the uterus is completely outside the vagina).

#4

Difficulty Emptying Bladder or Bowel

Difficulty going could be caused by a prolapsed organ or a condition called pelvic floor dysfunction (PFD).

A prolapsed organ can press against the bladder, the urethra (the tube through which urine exits the body), or the rectum, making urination and/or defecation difficult.

PFD causes impaired relaxation and coordination of the pelvic floor and abdominal muscles during bowel movements, which can make evacuation difficult.

#5

Backache

A prolapsed organ sometimes causes back pain ranging from mild to severe. Most women feel the pain in their lower back or near their tailbone.

Backache is more common with a small intestine prolapse, and it's often accompanied by painful sex.

Low back pain that radiates to the thighs or groin can also be a symptom of a less common pelvic floor disorder called nonrelaxing pelvic floor dysfunction.²

WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you're experiencing any of these symptoms it's important to see your doctor to understand the root cause. The good news is that there are things you can do right now to protect and strengthen your pelvic floor:

- Perform kegel exercises promptly and consistently. A pelvic floor biofeedback device like the PeriCoach system can help you squeeze the right muscles. Experts recommend strengthening the pelvic floor as a first line of defense against UI.
- Avoid constipation and straining, which can damage the pelvic floor muscles.
- Wear a pessary (check with your doctor) to help support the prolapsed organ.

ABOUT PERICOACH



The PeriCoach system is a vaginally-insertable pelvic floor biofeedback device designed to guide women through Kegel exercises. PeriCoach is outfitted with sensors that detect the contraction of your muscles as you squeeze against the device, and it pairs with your smartphone (via Bluetooth) so you can see your muscles working in real-time.

In just five minutes a day you can help strengthen your pelvic floor muscles and help reverse or eliminate the symptoms of prolapse, including bladder leakage. The PeriCoach system is FDA-cleared, which means it has met stringent product safety requirements and is safe to use.

[Learn more](#) about PeriCoach, and [hear stories](#) from real women about their experience using the PeriCoach system.



SOURCES

1. <https://www.merckmanuals.com/home/women-s-health-issues/pelvic-floor-disorders/pelvic-floor-disorders>
2. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3498251/>

SUMMARY

Due to many factors, including the strain of pregnancy and childbirth as well as hormonal changes during menopause, women are prone to developing pelvic floor problems. Here are five signs to look out for and what you can do about it.

