

# What You Need To Know About **Pelvic Floor Conditions**



*Woman's*

## Age and childbirth can take a toll on a woman's body.

Problems with bladder and bowel control and pelvic pain (including during sex) are often due to issues with the pelvic floor muscles. These problems do not usually resolve on their own. With the right treatment, pelvic floor disorder symptoms can be reduced or even completely eliminated.

### **If you experience any of these symptoms, Woman's can help!**

- Bladder leaks when you cough, sneeze or laugh
- An uncontrollable urge to use the bathroom
- Frequent urination and/or constipation
- Pelvic pain during sex, urination or bowel movements
- Severe cramps in the pelvic area

**Our comprehensive team of experts, including gynecologists, urologists and physical therapists, are committed to helping you regain control over your pelvic floor muscles.**



**1 in 4**

**women in the U.S.  
suffer from bladder leaks.**

# Bladder leaks

You may not think of yourself as being “incontinent,” but any uncontrollable or unexpected urine leakage is defined as “incontinence.”

## Common causes of bladder leaks

- **Injury:** Muscle damage from childbirth, infections, spinal injury or cancer.
- **Medical conditions:** Pregnancy, obesity or diabetes can weaken pelvic muscles.
- **Genetics:** A family inherited predisposition for pelvic weakness and urinary incontinence.

## Types of bladder leaks

1. **Stress incontinence:** When you “leak” due to activities that put pressure on your bladder, such as sneezing or lifting heavy items. *This is due to weakened muscles and connective tissues that support the bladder.*
2. **Urge incontinence:** A sudden and strong need to urinate. *This is caused by abnormal bladder contractions.*

## Treatment

Your treatment plan will depend upon your individual condition. Below are some available options:

**Physical Therapy:** Many women experience results within 2 to 3 weeks with one visit per week and at-home exercises.

**Medications:** With urge incontinence, drugs can calm spasms that cause the sudden need to urinate.

**Surgery:** Depending upon your condition, your doctor may recommend surgery.

## Next steps

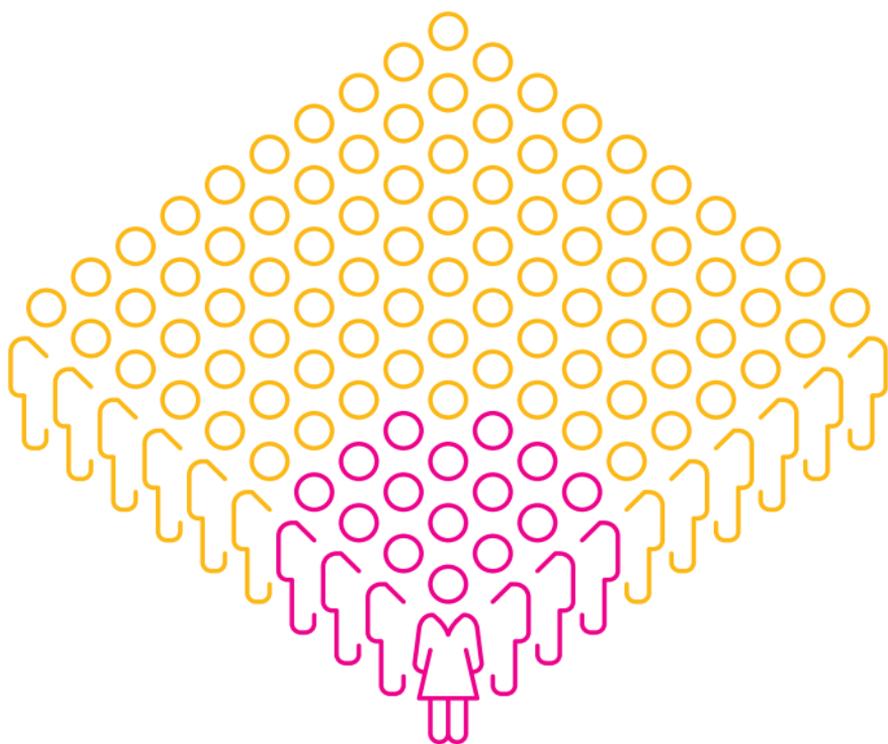
Schedule a private physical therapy consultation at Woman’s Center for Wellness by calling **225-924-8311**.



Visit [womans.org/leaks](https://www.womans.org/leaks) to watch our educational videos.

# Pelvic Pain

Pelvic pain can be sudden, chronic, intermittent or cyclic in nature.



About

**15%**

of women have  
chronic pelvic pain.

## Is pain becoming a problem? Ask yourself...

- Is sex painful?
- Does the pain dictate whether or not you choose to participate in certain activities?
- Do you feel muscle spasms in your pelvic floor?
- Does your vulva or “panty area” hurt?
- Is the pain causing emotional problems?

## Common causes of pelvic pain

- **Endometriosis:** Tissue “growths” in the pelvic area that cause pain and infertility
- **Levator Ani Syndrome:** Muscle spasms in the deep pelvic floor muscles
- **Vulvodinia:** Pain in the vulva or the perineum, or “panty area”
- **Dyspareunia/Vaginismus:** Painful intercourse

## Treatment

Your treatment plan will depend upon your individual condition. Below are some of the options available:

- Therapy, including manual therapy
- Exercise prescriptions
- Biofeedback/electrical stimulation
- Education on symptom management
- Medication management

You CAN stop the pain. You CAN feel normal again.

## Next steps

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# Pelvic Organ Prolapse

It's so much more common than you think!

Over half of  
women age

# 50

**and above**

experience pelvic  
organ prolapse.

## What is pelvic organ prolapse?

- Prolapse occurs when the pelvic floor muscles can no longer hold up the bladder, vagina, uterus and rectum, and they can “fall” outside the body.
- Most women will notice a bulge from the vagina when they wash or wipe after using the bathroom, or as they go about daily activities.
- While prolapse usually isn't painful, it can be very uncomfortable and can cause a feeling of pressure, which interferes with daily life.

## Common causes of prolapse

Anyone can experience prolapse; however, genetics and risk factors may make a woman more prone to this condition, such as:

- Vaginal or forceps deliveries or multiple births
- Family history
- Obesity
- Chronic constipation

## Symptoms

In addition to an uncomfortable bulge, you can also experience symptoms such as:

- Pain or pressure in the pelvis, lower back or both
- Urinary leakage or feeling like you always need to go to the bathroom
- Constipation
- Painful sex

## Treatment

Your treatment plan will depend upon your individual condition. Talk to your doctor if you think you have prolapse. Below are some of the options available:

- **Therapy:** Specialized physical therapy to strengthen the muscles that support the vagina, bladder and rectum.
- **Vaginal Support:** A pessary (vaginal insert) can be used to support the organ. The pessary needs to be removed periodically, but for some women it is an excellent long-term solution.
- **Surgery:** There are many ways to surgically correct prolapse, depending on your body and condition. Discuss options with your OB-GYN, urologist or urogynecologist.

## Next steps

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Visit [womans.org/prolapse](https://www.womans.org/prolapse) to watch our educational videos.



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Founded in 1968, Woman's is a nonprofit organization, governed by a board of community volunteers, providing medical care and services in order to improve the health of women and infants, including community education, research and outreach.