

What is Women's Health?

Women's health is an umbrella term that covers female-specific problems encountered throughout life. Most commonly people seek assistance from their physiotherapist for advice on exercise, pelvic floor dysfunction and musculoskeletal pains such as neck, back and pelvic pain.

All of these issues require a comprehensive assessment and our team are well suited to help you with this. Our goal is to assess the source of the problem, assist with settling the symptoms and to help you with management and prevention. In the case of pelvic floor dysfunction and pregnancy-related issues having the right advice and exercises specific to your problem is very important.



Did you know?

Currently there is strong evidence to support the "use of physiotherapy as an efficient, cost effective and safe way to improve continence". In recent years it has become recognised by the International Continence Society that "pelvic floor muscle training should be first line treatment for all women with stress urinary incontinence." (Australian Physiotherapy Association, 2011)

Over 50% of women experience pelvic floor dysfunction during life, with many of these women unaware that there may be treatment available to improve their problem. You just do not have to just "put up with it".

A large number of women who feel they have the knack in switching on the pelvic floor muscles are actually bearing down instead of lifting up, and overtime contributing to further pelvic floor weakness.

Pelvic Floor Muscles

The floor of the pelvis is made up of layers of muscle and other tissues. These layers stretch like a hammock from the tailbone at the back, to the pubic bone in front.

A woman's pelvic floor muscles support her bladder, womb (uterus) and bowel (colon), helping to control your bladder- bowel, and help with sexual function. (Continence Foundation of Australia, 2007) A few pelvic floor squeezes 'here and there' is not muscle training and will not improve strength.



Advice

- Don't avoid drinking fluid as a way of avoiding the bathroom.
- Ensure you keep caffeinated drinks to a minimum.
- If you have back or pelvic pain, see your physiotherapist as pelvic floor and abdominal strengthening may help your pain.
- Sit ups are actually not advised for pelvic floor dysfunction- 'not pelvic floor safe'
- Check with your medical practitioner to discuss whether there may if any medications may contribute to incontinence.
- Avoid repetitive heavy lifting.
- Constipation and straining causes more stress on your pelvic floor so ensure your bowels are regular.
- When activating your pelvic floor ensure that you 'squeeze and lift', and do not hold your breath, tighten your thighs, buttocks or abdominals.
- Do not try to switch on your pelvic floor and hold it for the entire day.
- Most importantly if you suspect you have some pelvic floor dysfunction then seek specialist advice before increasing current general exercise regime- certain exercises are not 'pelvic floor safe'.

Role of Physiotherapist

- Assessment, education and prescription of individualised pelvic floor strength program.
- Assessment and treatment of lower back pain or other musculoskeletal pains.
- Assessment and prescription of an individualised abdominal strengthening program or Clinical Pilates program.

- Treatment of other women's health conditions such as mastitis, pelvic girdle pain, pelvic instability, and more.

For more information on our women's health services or Clinical Pilates for women please contact your local Physica clinic.

Your Problem is:

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Suggested /Planned Management/Specific Advice:

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WOMEN'S HEALTH

About

