

## Pelvic Floor Dysfunction (PFD)

**Dysfunction** means that something is not working right. The **pelvic floor** is a network of muscles, ligaments, and tissues that act like a hammock to support the organs of the pelvis: (the uterus, vagina, bladder, urethra, and rectum.) If the muscles become sensitive or strained, they may cause pain in the pelvis.

### Symptoms

The most common symptom is a feeling of either pain (sometimes sharp) or a heaviness/pressure in the area of the vagina and lower abdomen. Symptoms tend to occur when women are upright, straining, or coughing and disappear when they are lying down and relaxing. For some women, sexual intercourse is painful. Dysfunction in the pelvic floor can affect the bladder and rectum. As a result, women with PFD can have problems with urination (having to go frequently, trouble starting to urinate), or problems having a bowel movement (difficulty going, constipation).

### Main causes of PFD

Pregnancy, delivery, trauma (fall, car accident), surgery, obesity, other pelvic disease (endometriosis, interstitial cystitis)

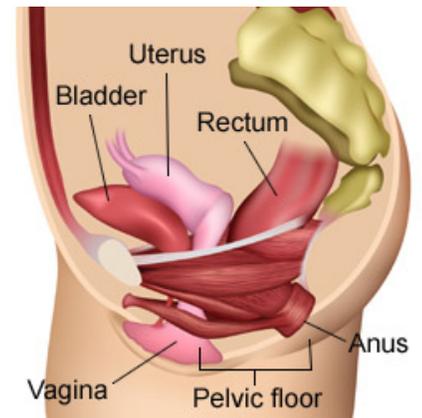
### Treatment

*Pelvic floor physical therapy* is a non-surgical procedure done by a physical therapist. The therapist applies pressure and stretching techniques to the pelvic floor muscles. She also trains the patient to control the pelvic floor muscles.

*Medications* in the form of muscle relaxants and vaginal suppositories can be given in low doses for short durations to relax the pelvic muscles.

*Therapeutic ultrasound* uses high frequency waves to eliminate pain in the affected area. It produces warmth inside the muscle to promote blood flow and control spasms.

*Trigger point injections* are injections placed directly in the dysfunctional muscles to control pain, treat inflammation, and reduce spasm. Some of these injections include a numbing agent, a steroid, or even botulinum toxin.



For more information on Pelvic Floor Dysfunction visit:

[www.pelvicpain.org](http://www.pelvicpain.org)

[www.ichelp.org](http://www.ichelp.org)

[www.fascrs.org](http://www.fascrs.org)