

What to do if I am still having problems?

You can speak to your GP or Consultant about being referred for Pelvic Health Physiotherapy Team

Useful links

Pogp.csp.org.uk leaflets:

- Pelvic Floor Exercises for Men
- Pelvic Floor Exercises for Women
- Improving Your Bowel Function
- Pelvic Organ Prolapse
- Squeezy App

Looking after your bladder, bowel and pelvic health when recovering from COVID-19

This leaflet can be made available in alternative languages / formats on request.

如有需要，本传单可提供其他语言/版式
此單張的其他語言/格式版本可按要求提供

Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona w innych językach/formatach.

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Warrington Road,
Prescot,
Merseyside, L35 5DR
Telephone: 0151 426 1600

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Marshall Cross Road,
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WA9 3DA
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Coronavirus has affected people in many different ways. It has been recognised that some people will suffer from some bladder, bowel or pelvic health issues. These issues can occur due to the continued coughing you may have experienced, stress, changes in your body systems due to the virus and an overall deconditioning of your muscles.

Some of the problems you may be suffering with:

Stress Urinary Incontinence: Involuntary leaking when you cough, sneeze, laugh, move or exercise.

Urgency / Urge Incontinence: An overwhelming, sudden urge to pass urine which may cause you to leak before reaching a toilet.

Incomplete Emptying: A feeling you have not fully emptied your bladder or leaking once you think you have finished.

Bowel Leaking: Involuntary loss of faeces or wind from your back passage.

Pelvic Organ Prolapse (women): A feeling of pressure, discomfort in the genital area or bulging in the vagina. Possibly heaviness or dragging in the lower tummy area. This can be accompanied by incontinence or difficulty going to the toilet.

Pelvic Pain: Pain that becomes persistent (without known cause) in the genital or pelvic region.

Tips for improving your pelvic health

- Drink approximately 1.5 to 2L of water a day, try to space it out evenly throughout the day to keep you hydrated and reduce/avoid water infections and constipation.
- Eating good nutritious food and staying hydrated will help your muscles recover and stay strong this can also help prevent constipation. However, try to limit fizzy and caffeinated drinks such as tea and coffee as these can irritate the bladder and make you need the toilet more often.

- Both men and women benefit from doing pelvic floor muscle exercises daily. The pelvic floor muscles help to support the bladder and bowel and aid our ability to control the passage of urine and / or faeces. To learn how see the pelvic floor exercise link below.
- If you need to cough, sneeze or lift heavy objects, try squeezing and lifting around your back passage before you do so. This is called 'the knack' and will help the pelvic floor control the bladder/bowel functions better.
- It is normal to empty your bladder 4 to 8 times per day if you are drinking the recommended 1.5 to 2 litres of fluid. If you are experiencing sudden urges and struggling to make it to the bathroom in time try stopping still, squeezing your pelvic floor muscles and taking a few deep breaths. If the urge lessens try walking calmly to the bathroom.
- If you feel you haven't or cannot fully empty your bladder or leak when you stand from the toilet try rocking back and forth or squeezing you pelvic floor muscles. Do not strain to empty your bladder. If you are experiencing difficulty initiating or passing urine you must speak to your GP.
- If you are feeling constipated or finding it difficult to pass stools try looking at your diet and hydration levels. Putting your feet on a small step so your knees are slightly higher than your hips can help. Try to avoid straining and instead try some deep tummy breaths and making a deep 'ahhhhhhhh' on the out breath. You feel may need a laxative, you can speak to a pharmacist or your GP regarding this.
- Try to make sure you are not holding your breath when you are doing things like standing from sitting, lifting, pushing or pulling things. Try a big exhale as you do the movement this will help manage the pressures in your abdomen better and allow your core muscles to support you.