

Pelvic floor problems following childbirth



Information for patients

Women's Health Physiotherapy



Why is my pelvic floor health important after childbirth?

Studies show that up to one in five women have pelvic floor problems after childbirth. These can include:

- Urinary incontinence
- Prolapse or looseness of the vagina
- Difficulty controlling bowels
- Sexual problems

Many pelvic floor problems in women after childbirth can be treated in the community or hospital with physiotherapy and care from nurses without invasive tests or treatments.

What is normal after childbirth?

Many women experience short term (lasting six to eight weeks) pelvic floor problems after childbirth.

These often include:

- Leaking urine when coughing
- Laughing or sneezing
- Leaking wind accidentally from your bottom
- A sensation of a bulge in the vagina

Most of these types of symptoms resolve within a few months, but if they persist it can indicate a problem with your pelvic floor which may need assessment and treatment.

What assessments and treatments are available for pelvic floor problems after childbirth?

Most pelvic floor problems can be assessed and treated in hospital or community by a Women's Health Physiotherapist. Women's health physiotherapists use pelvic floor muscle training to help you to strengthen and activate your pelvic floor to improve your symptoms. A full and comprehensive assessment of symptoms is usually done before the start of treatment, this often includes questionnaires which you fill in yourself in private.

Why am I receiving this information leaflet and questionnaire?

Many women find it difficult to talk to their doctor or nurse about pelvic floor problems which start and persist after childbirth, and many suffer in silence. Using an **online questionnaire**, completed on a computer or handheld device in the comfort of your own home, is a helpful and discreet way to assess your pelvic floor symptoms yourself. The questionnaire provides a way of telling your nurse or doctor you are having problems with pelvic floor symptoms after childbirth and will help you access appropriate treatment.

We would like you to complete the ePAQ-Pelvic Floor online questionnaire enclosed, to help you to identify any problems or concerns you have about your pelvic floor following childbirth.

What is ePAQ-Pelvic Floor?

ePAQ-Pelvic Floor is an interactive questionnaire which can be completed at home via the internet on a tablet device or computer. It asks questions about pelvic floor symptoms including urinary, bowel, vaginal and sexual symptoms. ePAQ-PF takes about 20 minutes to complete and will help you consider your symptoms and how they are affecting your day-to-day life.

You will need a personalised voucher code (at the bottom of this page) and your date of birth to log into the secure website.

After completing the questionnaire, you will be able to view a report with a score for the different types of pelvic floor symptoms you have experienced. This will help you to understand your symptoms and to feel in control when you are seeking treatment and support for them. For example, you can save or print the report and take it with you to see your GP or practice nurse to discuss your pelvic floor problems.

To access your ePAQ-PF questionnaire please go online to:

<http://start.epaq.co.uk/voucher/>

You will be prompted to enter your date of birth and the voucher code below to access your personal secure ePAQ-Pelvic Floor Questionnaire

Voucher code



Alternative formats can be available on request.

Please email: alternativeformats@sth.nhs.uk

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