

Fact Sheet

Pelvic floor exercises

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Pelvic floor

It is very important for you to exercise the pelvic floor muscles during your pregnancy, and to continue these exercises after the birth of your baby.

The pelvic floor muscles surround your urethra (front passage), vagina and anus (back passage) and help to support the pelvic organs. They form a sling running from the pubic bone at the front to the tailbone at the back.

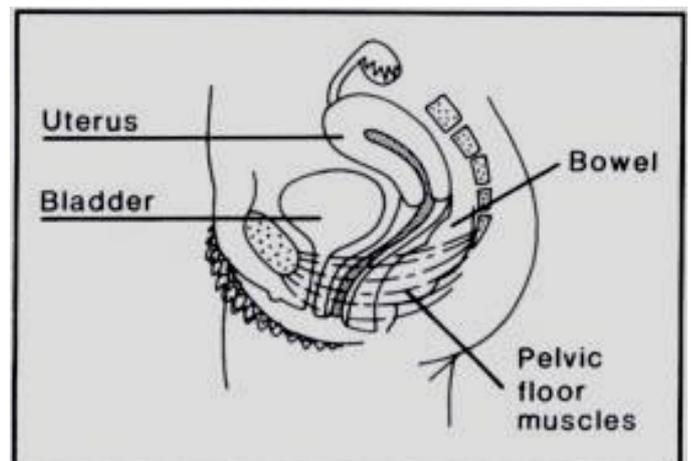
If these muscles are weak, you may lose control of your bladder or bowel, experience the sensation of "something coming down" into the vagina, or you may experience decreased sexual sensation

How to exercise pelvic floor muscles?

- a pelvic floor exercise is just a squeeze and lift of the muscles as if you are holding onto wind or a "wee"
- before your baby is born, you may be able to hold the muscles tight for up to 10 seconds. After the birth, you may find you can only hold the muscles tight for 2-3 seconds
- in the first few days, try a few gentle pelvic floor squeezes regularly to ease pain and aid healing
- once you feel comfortable, try to squeeze as strongly as possible and hold for as long as you are able. Do a tummy tuck at the same time as these muscles work together
- repeat as many times as you can, resting for a few seconds between each squeeze

- each time you do your exercises, try to do the same number of pelvic floor exercises in a row. Also try to do as many quick squeezes as slow ones
- repeat this at least 3 times every day in any position, but make sure you **don't hold your breath**
- gradually progress your exercises, aiming to reach 10 repetitions of 10 seconds, plus lots of quick squeezes. Once the muscles feel strong and you have good bladder control, you can do your exercises once a day
- remember to squeeze your pelvic floor muscles and tummy tuck before you cough, sneeze, lift or when you are trying to put off going to the toilet.

If you are experiencing any problems, contact the Obstetric Physiotherapist at your hospital.



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This written information is for guidance only and does not replace consultation and advice by your health care provider.