



PHYSIOTHERAPISTS WHO HAVE TRAINING TO TREAT PELVIC FLOOR DYSFUNCTION CAN HELP WITH ISSUES SUCH AS:

- bladder and bowel dysfunction such as urgency, leakage and difficulty emptying
- pelvic organ prolapse, when the pelvic organs are falling downward and need support from below
- sexual dysfunction, including problems with arousal, sensation and orgasm
- pelvic pain that may arise from the pelvic floor muscle, bladder, bowel, uterus, pelvis, abdomen, low back or tailbone



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- Bladder & bowel dysfunction
- Sexual dysfunction
- Pelvic organ prolapse
- Pelvic pain
- Care for women, men and children

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- Work-related injuries (WCB)
- Neck, back and limb injuries
- Headache & TMJ injuries

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PHYSIOTHERAPY INJURY CLINIC

THE LOWDOWN ON PELVIC FLOOR PHYSIOTHERAPY

IT’S NOT JUST FOR WOMEN
— MEN AND CHILDREN ALSO
BENEFIT FROM TREATMENT

“I didn’t know that physiotherapy could help with that! I should have come years ago.”

That is a commonly heard phrase in a pelvic floor physiotherapy clinic, but I am happy to say that information about this research-based medical treatment is starting to spread. Pelvic floor physiotherapy has been available in North America, including Winnipeg, for over 25 years, and twice that overseas, yet awareness of its existence still has a way to go.

Over the years, pelvic floor physiotherapy has gained recognition for its contribution to women’s health in numerous gynecological areas, such as pregnancy, childbirth and menopause. However, there are several areas that can significantly benefit from physiotherapy treatment that may be less obvious. While often people are aware that pelvic floor physiotherapy is beneficial for women, they may be surprised to learn that children and men are also treated. So while it is becoming more commonplace to seek treatment for female urinary incontinence, if you are suffering with hemorrhoids, constipation, sexual dysfunction, pelvic pain, scheduled for prostate surgery, or your child battles with bedwetting or soiling, physiotherapy may not jump to mind as a medical option ... but it is and probably should be!

While physiotherapy does not require a medical referral, if you are unsure whether pelvic floor assessment is right for you, speak with your family doctor or specialist. You could even call and talk to a physiotherapist who treats pelvic floor dysfunction and they could help direct you. Since pelvic floor dysfunction is often multifactorial, it’s best to have your team of medical clinicians collaborating in your care, and your physician may want to test for things like infections that could be causing or complicating matters.

As with all physiotherapy, pelvic floor physiotherapy will include a thorough history-taking and assessment. However, it differs in that an internal vaginal and/or rectal examination will likely be performed to properly evaluate the pelvic floor structures. Treatment may include education regarding the pelvic floor muscle (PFM) and what it does, bladder and bowel-friendly lifestyle choices, proper

toileting biomechanics and postures to assist emptying of bladder and bowel, toileting frequency, etc. Manual therapy treatments may be administered, such as scar tissue and trigger point release, stretching and mobilizations, and modalities may be utilized such as cold laser, muscle stimulation, biofeedback or acupuncture.

Most likely, PFM exercise will be part of your care, since neglect to this muscle can contribute to or cause pelvic floor dysfunction. A proper muscle assessment will determine if your PFM is safe to be exercised and allows an exercise prescription to be customized for each patient’s specific needs, based on scientific exercise physiology. Your pelvic floor physiotherapist will provide instruction for proper exercise technique to ensure you get the most out of your effort and that you don’t perform the exercise in a way that may injure your muscle. Research shows that when PFM exercises are prescribed and performed correctly significant improvement or complete cure can be achieved.

Because the PFM is involved with functions that may be embarrassing to talk about, this sensitive area of medical care may be overlooked. Over the past 25 years, there has been gradual but steady growth in recognition of pelvic floor health and the important role of pelvic floor physiotherapy. Much can be done to prevent, improve or correct pelvic floor dysfunction and physiotherapists trained in pelvic floor health want to help!

Dr. Kelli Berzuk is a pelvic floor physiotherapist at Nova Physiotherapy/ Incontinence & Pelvic Pain Clinic. You can find Kelli and many other great physiotherapists in the Find a Physiotherapist section of our website at mbphysio.org.

TO KEGEL OR NOT TO KEGEL...

‘Kegels,’ or pelvic floor muscle (PFM) exercises, are among the most familiar treatments for addressing incontinence and other PFM issues. However, they are often performed incorrectly. When this happens there is no benefit and the muscle may even be injured.

As well, pelvic floor physiotherapy treatment may be warranted before a customized exercise program is prescribed.

When done correctly, Kegels do work. Good PFM health is essential for healthy bladder, bowel and sexual function and more, so it is important that this muscle be as healthy and fit as possible, but sometimes that takes more than a ‘Kegel’ to accomplish.