

Pelvic Floor Dialogues

So I pee a little when I laugh. That's normal right?

How has my body changed "down there" since I had my baby?

Everyone talks about Kegels. Do they really work? How much is enough?

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Celebrating Motherhood

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I've Got Dad's Eyes, Mom's Bladder



Okay, mom—and dad—I've got this leaky bladder, is it a genetic thing? Researchers studied about one million genes of postmenopausal women with urgency urinary incontinence (UUI)—that "I gotta go NOW" feeling. They learned that parents can pass along specific genes that increase the odds for UUI. Urgency urinary incontinence is also known as overactive bladder (OAB), when the bladder "squeezes" or contracts at an unwelcome time.

Speaking of genetics, drug companies are working on new drugs for overactive bladder (OAB), including genetic therapies. New drugs may also help control the nerves that play a role in OAB. Plus, scientists are testing different doses and combinations of medicines for this condition. It typically takes 10 years to bring a new drug to market. Thankfully, these efforts may mean better treatments for our daughters. In the meantime, learn about how other women cope with OAB. Join the Voices for PFD online community .

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A Mother's Love

The Jim Brickman song “A Mother’s Love” thanks moms for “all of the sleepless nights you lay awake.” If only our kids really knew! Might urinary incontinence (UI), leakage of urine, be the reason you are missing out on those ZZZs? In a study of 351 women, aged 46 to 76 years, researchers found a link between limited “restorative” sleep and UI symptoms:

- Heavier women more often struggle with stress urinary incontinence (SUI), loss of urine with sneezing, coughing, laughing, and exercising. And, researchers found that this excess body fat disrupts deep, REM-cycle sleep.
- Nocturia, getting up often throughout the night to go, and UI appear to go hand-in-hand.
- Plus, those with a slow reaction time to the need to go—think, oh, I am too tired to get out of bed—were at greater risk for urinary urge incontinence (UUI).

Don't let sleepless nights be your legacy. Talk with a urogynecologist about your urinary symptoms.

Good News for all Generations of Women

Overactive bladder (OAB) related to pelvic organ prolapse (POP), stage 2 or greater, can be reversed. POP is the dropping of the pelvic organs caused by the loss of normal support of the vagina. Cystocele is a type of POP where the front wall of the vagina sags downward or outward, allowing the bladder to drop from its normal position. About half of those with POP also have OAB. This led doctors to an interesting discovery. They noticed that one type of cystocele POP surgery, tension-free vaginal mesh, reduced OAB symptoms. Right after surgery, OAB was better for 66 percent of the patients. And, once they recovered from surgery, OAB cleared up for even more women (an additional 11 percent).

Baby Bowels? Time to Talk with Your Doc

The depth of a mother's love is incredible. And, for many women, this initial act of love starts with the toll that pregnancy takes on their body. For example, many have difficult bowel movements, or constipation, during pregnancy:

- 40% of pregnant women get constipated.
- 1 in 30 pregnant women have painful bowel movements.
- Irregularity is often worst during the first two trimesters.

Shifts in hormones may cause you to be irregular. Dehydration can also cause constipation. As your baby grows, changes in the pelvic floor may leave you feeling constipated. Studies also tie iron pills to bowel problems. Talk with your doctor about any bowel problems. Ask if it would be helpful to see a urogynecologist.

Dedicated to the Ones We Love

Many U.S. adults spend time caring for loved ones. In this role, they also become health advocates. The Pew Internet & American Life Project looked at the use of the web to help with caregiving tasks. It turns out that caregivers are more active students of health. They often discuss health concerns with clinicians, friends, and family members. Caregivers also surf the web for health information. And, about one-third of caregivers use cell phones to gather answers.



To all those moms, daughters, grannies, aunts, sisters, partners, and other women out there—thank you. And, here's some information about ways to be a health advocate for those with pelvic floor disorders!

The Rest of the Story

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