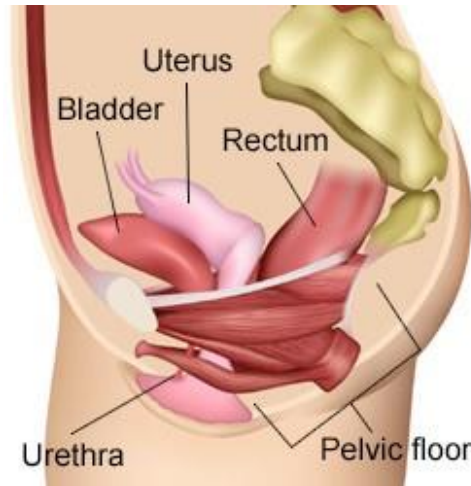


## Pelvic Floor UroStym Program

### What is Pelvic Floor?

The pelvic floor is a set of muscles that spread across the bottom of the pelvic cavity like a hammock. The pelvic floor has three openings that run through it, the urethra, the vagina, and the rectum. The functions of the pelvic floor include:

- To support the pelvic organs, specifically the uterus, the bladder, and the rectum
- To help provide sphincter control for the bladder and bowel
- To withstand increases in pressure that occur in the abdomen such as coughing, sneezing, laughing, straining, and lifting
- To enhance the sexual response
- They steady the hips, lumbar spine, sacrum and the pelvis
- during movement to reduce low-back, hip and lower extremity pain



### What are the Consequences of a Weak Pelvic Floor?

When a woman ages, the pelvic floor muscles may begin to sag and weaken as a result of stress placed on them. Many conditions can stress the pelvic floor including:

- Pregnancy-related changes in the body
- Heavy straining during childbirth
- Damage to the pelvic floor sustained during childbirth
- Repeated straining such as during bowel movements, or with chronic cough
- Repetitive heavy lifting

As a woman goes through menopause, estrogen levels fall. This leads to a weakening of the pelvic floor muscles. Weak pelvic floor muscles can result in pelvic organ prolapse (when one of your pelvic organs falls out of place or through the vaginal canal). Prolapse can

occur to your bladder, urethra, uterus, rectum, intestine, and vagina. Other consequences of a weak pelvic floor include the involuntary leakage of urine or stool (urinary and fecal incontinence).

### **Good Candidates for Urostym Program**

- Stress Urinary Incontinence
- Urge Incontinence
- Mixed Incontinence (both stress and urge)
- Fecal Incontinence
- Pre or Post Partum
- Pelvic Organ Prolapse
- Irritative Voiding Symptoms
- Pelvic Pain
- Rectal Pain
- Pelvic Dysfunction

### **What are the Benefits of Strengthening the Pelvic Floor?**

- Maintenance of strength, tone, and elasticity of the pelvic floor muscles. This helps support the abdominal and pelvic contents against gravity.
- Helps with bladder and bowel control
- Allow patient participation
- Effective treatment

### **How do I Recognize the Muscles?**

It can be difficult to learn how to correctly contract your pelvic floor muscles. There are several ways to identify if you are activating the correct muscles:

- Sit on the toilet. Empty a small amount of urine and try to stop the flow of urine. Relax completely and allow your bladder to empty. If you cannot stop the flow of urine, it is a sign of pelvic floor muscle weakness. If you are successful then you have the basic technique.

- **It is important not get in a habit of stopping your urine midstream. This can lead to urinary tract infections and incomplete emptying of the bladder. Perform this technique only 1x a month to check progress.**

### **How do I Start Doing Kegel Exercises?**

When learning to do Kegel exercises it is best to start doing them in a position that will allow you to isolate the pelvic floor muscles. Our program teaches you do identify and isolate the correct muscles.

- Contract your pelvic floor in the same manner as you did when you identified the muscles above
- When you are at the office each week we will test your progress in how your muscles are improving in strength and endurance.

Then you will be given an exact prescription that will help your pelvic floor get strong. You will always do 4 sets of exercises 4 times a day while you are building up your strength. An example of a set of exercises is you hold the contraction for 3 seconds, then relax for 3 seconds. Then you will do this 4 times in a row and 4 times a day. Be sure you allow a rest period of the same length of hold between each contraction.

It is also important to perform quick contractions or “quick flicks.” A quick flick is when you squeeze your pelvic floor for 1 second and rest for 1 second. Each week you will also be given an amount of Quick Flicks to do at the end of each session. This exercise focuses on your fast twitch muscle fibers that “catch” your urine when you cough, sneeze, or laugh.

### **Your program for success: Depends upon your response the therapy**

To get the most out of your exercises be sure you use only the pelvic floor muscles, and not your buttocks or thigh muscles. No other muscle movement will be seen if you are doing the exercises correctly. It is also important not to hold your breath while doing Kegels. Breathe normally and focus on the pelvic floor muscles tightening and relaxing. Holding your breath makes it more difficult for the muscles to work properly.

When you first begin doing the exercises you may notice that it is difficult to maintain the contraction, and the muscles do not want to stay tightened for very long. When you feel the muscles let go, relax them. In a week or two you will notice that the control improves.

### **How do I Progress My Kegel Exercises?**

Once you feel you can perform the exercises well lying down, try them in sitting, and then standing. It is also a good idea to work them into your daily routine (i.e. while brushing your teeth, at stop lights, or watching T.V.). This makes it easier to make a habit of doing the exercises every day.

### **In addition to Kegels we use Biofeedback Treatment**

Pelvic floor biofeedback therapy is a treatment intended to help patients learn to strengthen and relax their pelvic floor muscles through using special computer equipment that measures muscle activity, and displays a graph on a computer screen for the patient to “see” what their muscles are doing.

### **Electrical Stimulation**

- Muscle stimulation aids in muscle re-education and strengthening. In our program stimulation is used to assist you in rehabilitating the weak pelvic floor muscles. By using the stimulation it helps our nerves and muscles respond to therapy quicker.

### **Behavior Modifications**

- Once your strength has improved the bladder you will work on re-training your bladder so that it can hold larger volumes of urine. We will continue to work on this throughout your therapy.
- We review the common dietary bladder irritants and see if in your diet by stopping some of these if it will result in a decrease of your symptoms.
- Once you can learn to use your muscles we will work on ways using the Kegels to decrease the sudden urge to urinate, decrease leaks, and lessen certain types of pelvic pain.

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**Follow up Visits:**

- Each week you will be given an exercise recommendation that includes both Kegels and Quick Flicks based upon your individual testing. It is very important for your therapy to do these as directed. Visits last approximately one hour. Each week you should see a change in your symptoms.