

# Pelvic Health in Pregnancy and Postpartum

Patient Information

www.interiorhealth.ca

## Pelvic Health During Pregnancy

During your pregnancy you will experience many changes to your body. If any of these concern you or create pain, you may want to seek professional help.

## Pelvic Health Postpartum

After the birth of your child, whether you've had a vaginal birth or a C-section birth, your body may require some attention from you.

Your body will recover on its own and will need some time to regain strength in your muscles and connective tissue.

Your whole body, including your pelvic floor, should slowly recover and eventually return to your pre-pregnancy fitness levels. We recommend you see a Pelvic Health Physiotherapist after you give birth if you have any pelvic health concerns so you can safely return to good physical shape.



## What are some pelvic floor concerns after birth that can be treated?

When returning to regular activities and exercise it can be important to be aware of common pelvic floor and core issues including:

- Urine, stool or gas leaking when you cough, sneeze or laugh during your daily activities or exercise
- Pain in the vagina and/or vulva with sitting or during activity
- Vaginal or perineal heaviness and/or bulging
- Difficulties emptying your bladder or bowel
- Pain at the scar site (vaginal or abdominal)
- Stretching of the abdominal muscles resulting in the six-pack muscles being further apart

If these issues do not resolve in the first few weeks postpartum, talk to your doctor, midwife or care provider. Seeing a Pelvic Health Practitioner (pelvic health physiotherapist, gynecologist or urogynecologist) can be helpful to assist you in resolving them.

*more information on other side →*

<b>Call 8-1-1</b> Healthlink BC www.healthlinkbc.ca	Nurse	24 hours a day	Daily	Call 8-1-1 to speak with a nurse, ask a dietitian about nutrition, or a pharmacist about your medication.
	Dietitian	9 a.m. – 5 p.m.	Mon – Fri	
	Pharmacist	5 p.m. – 9 a.m.	Daily	
	Hearing Impaired	Call 7-1-1		

# Pelvic Health in Pregnancy and Postpartum (*continued*)

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## What are some factors that may result in pelvic floor concerns?

Your pelvic floor may need more care if you have experienced one or more of the following:

- Forceps or vacuum or both
- Pushing for more than 2 hours
- Experiencing a severe perineal tear
- Episiotomy
- Having a baby over 8.5 lbs at birth or with a head circumference over 35.5 cm
- Delivering after several prior vaginal births

## Ask for help if you have a concern

Knowing that most postpartum people recover in a natural and timely way there are common concerns and risks after birth that can be treated. This information is important to help you make decisions around your own care and when to seek out help. Postpartum healing is your own individual journey, listen to your body and ask for help if you have a concern.



## Looking for Help?

If you have concerns, speak up! You don't have to live with symptoms just because "you've had a baby". Share your concerns with your current health care provider (physician, midwife, nurse, physiotherapist). They will get you started with treatment or refer you to another health care provider to treat you.

OR

## Find a Pelvic Health Physiotherapist.

Specially trained physios can assess and treat your postpartum health issues as well. Many postpartum issues can be treated with physiotherapy alone. You can find a private physiotherapist or a clinic that focuses on pelvic floor health at:

### [www.bcphysio.org](http://www.bcphysio.org)

Click the "Find a Physio" link, then select any/all:

- Incontinence
- Women's Health
- Pelvic Floor

Other resources:

[www.bepelvichealthaware.ca](http://www.bepelvichealthaware.ca)