

Pelvic Pain

What is pelvic pain?

Pelvic pain affects approximately 1 in 6 women. It can be distressing and impact on your quality of life and your ability to carry out everyday activities.

Below are some common examples of pelvic pain:

- Pain, ache, or discomfort in the genital area, pelvis, lower back and or abdomen
- Painful examinations including smear tests
- Difficulty using tampons/menstrual cups
- Painful sex/unable to achieve penetration
- Difficulty emptying your bladder and or bowels
- Pain or straining with bladder or bowel emptying

What causes pelvic pain?

It can be due to physical, psychological and/or social factors. It is rarely a result of just one of these factors, and sometimes a physical cause cannot be found.

What to expect from your pelvic health physiotherapy appointment:

- Your appointment in a private clinic room.
- Initial holistic assessment including a detailed history and what your symptoms are.
- Potential examination to assess your lower back, hip and pelvis.
- Potential vaginal examination with consent to assess the pelvic floor muscles.
 - If this is recommended for you, we can discuss this during your appointment.
 - You can choose whether it is right for you and book a future appointment time to suit you.
 - You can be examined if you are on your period, as long as you feel comfortable.
- Customised treatment plan including easy steps to follow at home.

What are the treatment options?

These vary from person to person, but can include:

- Exercises
- Self-management advice
- Advice for healthy bladder and bowels
- Re-training muscles
- Breathing exercises, mindfulness, meditation
- Manual physiotherapy

What can you do to help yourself?

Breathing

Pain often results in muscle tension within the pelvic floor. Deep abdominal breathing can help to ease tension in the pelvic floor as well as reduce pain.

1. Sit or lie down on a comfortable, flat surface.
2. Relax your shoulders, moving them down away from the ears.
3. Put a hand on your chest and a hand on your stomach.
4. Without straining or pushing, breathe in through your nose until you can't take in any more air.
5. Feel the air moving through your nostrils into your abdomen, expanding your stomach and sides of the waist. Your chest remains relatively still.
6. Purse your lips as if sipping through a straw. Exhale slowly through your lips for 4 seconds and feel your stomach gently contracting.
7. Repeat these steps several times for best results.

Stress Management

Stress and anxiety are often linked to pelvic floor tension and can make your symptoms worse.

Techniques to reduce stress, and change unhelpful thoughts and behaviours include:

- Prioritising rest, maintaining healthy sleep routines and regular exercise.

Sexual Intercourse

When having sexual intercourse, we recommend the use of a lubricant. Using a natural, plant-based, organic lubricant which is the right pH balance for the vagina can help to reduce discomfort during penetrative intercourse.

Use of Heat / Ice

Applying heat or ice:

Ice – Use crushed ice cubes or a bag of frozen peas. Protect the skin from an ice burn by placing the ice pack in a wet towel. Leave in place for 10-15 minutes.

Heat – Use a warm water bottle/or heat pack following the instructions provided when you purchased it. To protect the skin from heat burns, wrap the item in a few layers of towel, leave in place for 10-15 minutes.

It can be reapplied after 2 hours if you wish. It's normal for the skin to become pink with either heat or ice, however if you experience discomfort or a burning sensation remove the item immediately. Don't apply heat or ice packs if you have poor skin sensation or poor circulation if you are diabetic or over areas of infection.

Postural re-education

Our posture can impact on the pain we feel in our pelvic floor. A good sitting position can help towards easing pain. When you sit, make sure your back and pelvis are fully supported and you are not bending forward with your legs crossed. Avoid sitting for long periods of time. You may find it comfortable to lie down with a pillow under your knees or lie on your side with a pillow between your legs.

Bladder and Bowel Advice

Emptying your bladder

- Ensure that you sit in a relaxed position on the toilet with your feet flat on the floor. Lean forwards and rest your forearms on your legs.
- Allow your body to relax as you empty your bladder.
- If you feel that you have not completely emptied your bladder once your flow has stopped:
 - take five deep breaths in and out
 - rock forwards
 - stand up and then sit back down

Emptying your bowels

Use a small step so that both feet are supported and your knees are higher than your hips, and lean forwards. This is an ideal position for opening your bowels.

If Constipated:

- Are you drinking enough fluids, recommended intake is 1.5-2L daily
- Gentle Exercise
- Diet
- Laxatives/stool softening medication if pain is aggravated by bowel movements – visit your GP or pharmacist for advice



Web Address

<http://www.cht.nhs.uk/services/clinical-services/physiotherapy-outpatients/patient-careinformation/>

Or google "CHFT outpatient physiotherapy"

Or scan the QR Code to take you to our website



If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Physiotherapy Department
Huddersfield Royal Infirmary
Telephone No: 01484 342434

MSK Physiotherapy Admin Office
Telephone No: 01484 905380

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce,
obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

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prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww.
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اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ طرزبان میں درکار ہوں، تو
برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

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