

# PELVIC FLOOR

By Sahanna Anandarasa  
Senior Physiotherapist

## What is it?

Imagine a sling of muscles making a hammock connecting your two sit bones, pubic bone and tail bone. This group of muscles is responsible for:

- Supporting abdominal and pelvic organs
- Controlling continence
- Urinating, defaecation, childbirth and sexual activity

## Pelvic Organ Prolapse

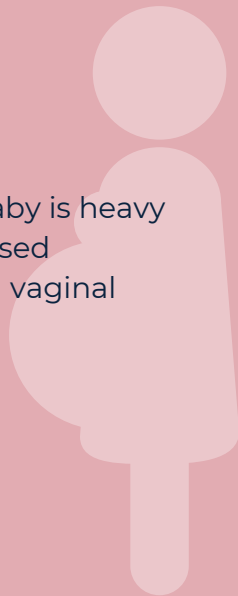
Your pelvic organs - bladder, bowel and uterus are held by your pelvic floor muscle and pelvic ligaments. If this support structure is weakened, these organs can start to bulge or 'slip' through

### SYMPTOMS:

- Women with a mild prolapse may have no symptoms
- A heavy or dragging sensation in the saddle area
- You may feel a bulge when you wipe yourself
- Pain or lack of sensation during sex
- Recurring urinary tract infections

### CAUSES

- Pelvic floor weakness
- Genetic predisposition
- Childbirth - especially if baby is heavy (>4kg) or if forceps were used
- History of multiple natural vaginal deliveries
- Chronic coughing
- Excessive weight gain
- Repetitive heavy lifting



## Management

Physio management includes:

- Supervised and structured exercise program to strengthen your pelvic floor muscles
- Bladder retraining
- Referral to a specialist/surgeon if conservative management is unsuccessful

## Bladder/Bowel Incontinence

### BLADDER SYMPTOMS:

- Urine leakage with activities involving increased abdominal/pelvic pressure E.g. coughing/sneezing, lifting, running
- Feeling an urgent need to go to the toilet consistently. Often associated with triggers E.g. putting key in the door
- Increased urination frequency

### BOWEL SYMPTOMS:

- Sudden urge to empty bowel
- Noticing faecal smearing on underwear
- Unable to control passing wind

### CAUSES

Pelvic floor muscle and connective tissue weakness or dysfunction due to:

- Menopause
- Pregnancy
- Childbirth - especially if there is tearing involving the back passage
- Constipation and straining
- Excessive impact exercise
- Repetitive heavy lifting
- Overactive pelvic floor

