

Lifestyle Modifications

LIFESTYLE MODIFICATIONS

- Appropriate bowel and bladder habits can assist with prolapse and urinary incontinence. NEVER hold your breath or strain while using the restroom. Empty your bladder, on average, every 2-3 hours.
- Do NOT practice pelvic floor exercises (Kegels) during voiding. This can interrupt the voiding reflex and lead to incomplete bladder emptying.
- Avoid constipation
- Eat a diet rich in fiber (25-30 grams). Try eating a variety of fruits, vegetables, and healthy whole grains (i.e. brown rice, quinoa, oatmeal). This can help you to avoid constipation.
- Drink an adequate amount of water per day. On average about 8 cups. This can help you to avoid constipation and straining with bowel movements.
- Avoid food and fluid irritants that aggravate the bladder like soda, caffeine, coffee/tea, chocolate, acidic foods, spicy foods, and artificial sweeteners. For a more comprehensive list, please refer to the (reference our existing guide and/or online)
- Stop smoking – coughing places strain on the pelvic floor muscles.
- Use correct posture when sitting, driving, standing, and performing daily activities
- Avoid abdominal sit-ups and exercises that put strain on the pelvic floor. Consult with a pelvic floor physical therapist on how to perform core strengthening exercises without straining the pelvic floor.
- Avoid straining, heavy lifting, or high impact sports or activities if you have been diagnosed with a prolapse or urinary incontinence. Seek the advice of a pelvic floor physical therapist for counsel on how to safely modify participation with your favorite activities.
- Vaginal weights or vaginal cones may assist with pelvic floor muscle strengthening.
- Keep a healthy weight, increased BMI increases the risk of POP and urinary incontinence.
- Complete at least 30 minutes a day of safe, low impact cardio exercise, such as biking, walking, swimming, or elliptical. Get medical clearance prior to initiating an exercise program.
- Avoid wearing tight clothing around the mid-section. This increases pressure on the pelvic floor and can contribute to pain as well as bladder irritability, urgency, and frequency.
- Set an alarm, place a sticky note, or try an APP to remind you to:
 - Perform your pelvic floor exercises throughout the day
 - Empty your bladder every 2-3 hours
- For assistance with stress urinary incontinence for short periods of time, try Poise Impressa. A small flexible insert that supports the bladder and urethra. Please read the safety instructions carefully.



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