

Osteoporosis treatment

Nearly 1 out of 2 Caucasian women over 50 will develop osteoporosis or a thinning of the density of your bones. The only outside symptom is often the gradual decline in height as you age and the development of a humped back. But the biggest danger from osteoporosis is broken bones. However, if detected early, osteoporosis can be managed and even reversed. Treatment involves increasing calcium, fluoride and vitamin D through medication or supplements and exercise. A weight-bearing exercise program such as walking and running will help maintain or build up bone strength. The Physical Medicine Department at Sanford Mid-Dakota Medical Center can recommend some exercises especially for those at risk for osteoporosis.

Frequently Asked Questions and Concerns

Q: Why is my physician referring me to Physical Therapy for my pelvic pain, urinary or fecal incontinence, constipation or sexual dysfunction?

A: Improper function of the pelvic muscles can result in any of those symptoms. The pelvic floor is made up of muscles, tendons, ligaments, connective tissue, joints and nerves. Physical Therapists are trained to treat these functions.

Q: Will my evaluation and treatment be confidential?

A: YES! You have the right to confidentiality of all personal, medical and financial information. Please ask for a copy of Sanford Mid-Dakota Medical Center's Rights and Responsibilities Booklet for more information.

Q: How is this exam different from the pelvic exam performed by my physician?

A: The Physical Therapist will examine how your joints and muscles work to see how much control you have over relaxing and contracting them, which ones are painful and weak. The therapist will provide a visual inspection of the pelvic floor followed by an external manual assessment. If you give consent, the therapist will do an internal assessment of the pelvic floor muscles and connective tissue.

If You Think You May Benefit From Physical Therapy

Ask your physician to refer you to a physical therapist who is specialized in this treatment area. Insurance payment varies so check your individual policy for coverage. For more information about the physical therapy management of women's health concerns throughout the life cycle, please contact the Sanford Mid-Dakota Physical Medicine Department at (605) 234-7142.

- Pelvic floor weakness, tension or pain
- Low back pain
- Labor & delivery pain management
- Osteoporosis
- Uncontrolled loss of urine
- Painful menstrual periods
- Post C-section care
- Menopause

Physical Therapy Services *for Women*

Services Include Treating:

Discomfort during and after pregnancy

Pelvic pain

Urinary Incontinence/uncontrolled loss of urine

Osteoporosis



Please contact:

Physical Medicine Department

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Physical Therapy Can Help Treat Women's Issues:

- **Discomfort during and after pregnancy**
- **Urinary Incontinence (uncontrolled loss of urine)**
- **Pelvic Pain**
- **Osteoporosis**

Discomfort during and after pregnancy

More than half of all pregnant women suffer from pain in the back, groin, rib cage, mid-back or shoulder blades. While this pain is common, it is not normal. A combination of factors may cause this pain such as an increase in maternal hormones resulting in increased stretching of the ligaments, tendons and cartilage as well as the changing posture due to the growth of the baby. These changes can lead to the development of problems in the spine, pelvis or rib cage. After delivery, many women have pain from scars from c-sections, episiotomies or vaginal tears. They may also experience pelvic pain and weakness as well as uncontrolled loss of urine.

A **physical therapist** can evaluate your symptoms and design an individualized program of care to enable you to manage your symptoms more effectively.

A Suggested Program May Include...

- Pool exercises.
- Fitting of therapeutic belts and supports.
- Massage or soft-tissue techniques to increase circulation, relieve pain, improve tissue mobility, or improve scar tissue mobility.
- Joint mobilization to allow movement at the joints and to relieve pain.
- Exercises to stretch tight muscles, strengthen weakened ones or improve posture.
- Suggestions for appropriate body mechanics and energy saving tips for home and work.

Urinary Incontinence (uncontrolled loss of urine)

People of all ages may experience an uncontrolled loss of urine, called urinary incontinence. Weakness of the pelvic floor muscles which form a sling around the vagina (birth canal), the urethra (tube from the bladder) and the rectum may cause leakage. Aging, pregnancy, childbirth, chronic constipation and chronic coughing can weaken the pelvic floor muscles. If you notice urine leaking when you cough, lift, sneeze or exercise, you may have the most common type of leakage called stress incontinence. If you feel a sudden and strong need to urinate and sometimes do not make it to the bathroom in time, you may have urge incontinence. A combination of both types is called mixed incontinence.

Physical Therapy Can Help You...

While uncontrolled loss of urine is common, it is not normal and can be treated by a medical team approach, including a physical therapist. The therapist can evaluate your problem and help you learn how to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles to prevent, decrease or even stop the leakage of urine altogether.

A Suggested Program May Include...

- Instruction in strengthening exercises or "Kegels" for the weakened pelvic floor muscles.
- Gentle electrical stimulation to help tighten the muscles and help the bladder be less irritable.
- Biofeedback training to help you learn to correctly tighten and relax the pelvic floor muscles.
- Designing a home exercise program to meet your needs.
- Instructing you on correct lifting and moving techniques.
- Suggesting foods to avoid which may be irritating to the bladder.
- Teaching you how to keep a bladder diary and move toward normal voiding habits.

Pelvic Pain

Gynecologists often see patients with chronic pelvic pain. The pain may be associated with sitting through a movie or meeting, intercourse or urination. It may include lower abdominal pain or numbness or tingling in the vaginal region. You may have pelvic pain caused or worsened by low back pain.

Pelvic pain may be closely connected to problems in the muscles, joints or nerves. Scars from surgery or childbirth may contribute to this painful condition. If you have been in pain for several weeks, you may be unconsciously holding parts of your body in a tense and rigid position to protect yourself from more pain. These tense positions may cause weak and painful muscles, strained joints and compressed nerves.

A **Physical Therapist** can evaluate your problem and help you manage the devastating effects of pelvic pain.

A Suggested Program May Include...

- Pain relief
- Manual therapy techniques for tight or tense muscles.
- Improvement/restoration of joint movement
- Electrical stimulation, heat, cold or ultrasound for pain relief
- Designing a home exercise program to meet your needs
- Helping you to change poor habits such as holding muscles in a tense position
- Educating you on good work postures, rest positions and relaxation techniques.
- Helping you develop a program for life-long fitness
- Exercises designed specifically for you to stretch or relax tight muscles and strengthen weak ones.