

# WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU SEE A PELVIC THERAPIST



## Introduction



It's normal to feel nervous (or not) about your first visit to pelvic therapy. Your therapist is familiar with people not being sure what to expect, and will be ready to answer your questions. They will also be ready to share what to expect from your time together. However, you can get a head start on your expectations by reading through this information.

## Consent

- It's important that you understand the ways in which your therapist might interact with your body. If you have any questions, please ask them.
- You can say "no" to any part of this exam and ask to have an exam ended at any point. You are always in charge of your body during your exam.

## Screens and Assessments

- Even bowel, bladder, pelvic, and sexual function concerns are tied to your whole body.
- Your therapist will likely want to take a look at how your body is put together and how you move to see if there are any larger themes that might be playing a role in your concerns. Sometimes some easy changes and ideas can be found here that can make a big difference in how quickly you meet your goals!

## The External Exam

- There might be an assessment of your trunk, legs, arms, and an exam of the outside of the pelvic area.
- Sometimes it will involve palpating (using their fingers to feel what your muscles are doing) your perineal area (over or under clothes).
- Sometimes it might involve a visual inspection of the genitals (especially if there are complaints of pain or pressure).
- Our goal is to figure out what is causing your issues and help you solve them. Multiple angles of evaluation give us a better idea of how to help you.

## The Internal Exam

- The examiner will help you into a comfortable position with appropriate coverage for your body. Often there are no stirrups or speculum as part of the exam.
- The pelvic therapist uses gloves and examination lubricant.
- The therapist is feeling for several things: abnormalities in the tissue, your ability to control (squeeze and relax) different parts, and whether there is any pain or discomfort present.
- The therapist will explain your anatomy to you as they are doing the examination, which is often a really empowering experience for people.

## What should I wear to my first visit?

- Wear something comfortable that you can move in.
- Something that is easy to change in and out of may be helpful as well.

## Your Treatment Program

- Your therapist will need to understand as much as they can about your time availability, motivation, privacy, and home situation to create a plan that has the best chance of being something that works for you.
- You and your therapist will come up with some ideas that will work with your life to help you meet your goals.
- Depending on what your issues are, some of the things you'll be doing may be:
  - Some changes to your home environment
  - Some changes to the way that you drink/eat or urinate/defecate.
  - Stretches and exercises
  - Breathing techniques
  - Pelvic floor training
  - Hands-on (manual) treatment techniques
  - Recording more data about your concern
  - Having conversations with partners who may need to adjust for some temporary changes in sexual activity
- You will likely get some handouts and written material to help you remember what to work on.
- **Remember: The plan is for YOU. Please speak up if any parts of it are confusing or don't seem possible with your current situation.**

