

## PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLE SPASM

**Q: I've been told I have PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLE SPASM. Where are those muscles and what do they do?**

**A:** There are two large "sling-like" muscles that suspend from the pubic bone in the front to the tail bone and hold up everything that is contained in the pelvic area (bladder, uterus, bowel, vagina). These muscles form what we call the pelvic floor and are named the "levators". Women can experience painful pelvic floor spasm in one or both of these levator muscles.

**Q: What does painful pelvic floor spasm feel like?**

**A:** The pain may be very sudden. Women often describe this pain as a heavy pressure feeling, almost as though something might "fall out". The spasm can sometimes create a sharp stabbing pain in the vagina that refers to the abdominal wall, pain across the lower pelvis and low back, or pain with passing bowel movements and/or having sexual intercourse. This pain tends to get worse with prolonged sitting or standing leaving the individual with increased discomfort as the day wears on.

**Q: What causes the muscles to go into spasm?**

**A:** Spasm of the pelvic floor muscles may occur in response to some other pain trigger such as a ruptured cyst or endometriosis. It is very common after pelvic surgery. Sometimes, spasm just happens and we don't know the cause.

**Q: WHAT TO DO?**

**A:** There are several things that can help. This list starts with the simplest suggestions and works up to the more complicated.

1. Let it fall out! The spasm creates the pressure or heavy feeling in the pelvis and many women will tighten the muscle involuntarily thinking it will help hold everything in. A vicious cycle is created when an already tight muscle is being made tighter which increases the pain, etc. When you feel the heavy pressure or back pain, try to mentally let go and let the muscles relax.

See more suggestions on reverse: