Research articles for further reading:


Many patients come to physical therapy with a referral from their doctor; however, most insurance companies do not require a physician’s referral. A referral, however, is required for Medicare/Medicaid patients.
How can PT help treat women’s health conditions?

The emphasis on health and wellness has developed a need to pay closer attention to our bodies during recreation, work, and throughout life. Some physical therapists have specialized training which will benefit women with a variety of medical conditions. Physical therapists trained in the area of women’s health have further knowledge about issues directly related to women as they move through different stages of life, from childbearing years to the post menopausal period.

Are my symptoms just something I have to live with?

It is important to note, that while these symptoms are common, they are not normal, nor something that you just have to “deal” with! Research shows that pelvic floor physical therapy should be offered as a first line approach for patients with incontinence, before medication or surgery, because pelvic PT has high cure rates with no side effects. If you are 25 or 95, physical therapy can help you improve your quality of life and allow you to do the things that you want to do.

What are your pelvic floor muscles?

It is hard to picture the muscle of your pelvic floor, because we cannot see them. The deep pelvic floor muscles that we often treat are called the levator ani muscles.

Your pelvic floor muscles not only help with bowel and bladder control, but are also a part of what we call your “core” muscles. You can think of your core as a pop can, with the top being your diaphragm, which helps us breathe. The front side is made up of your transverse abdominis muscles, and the back side is your multifidus muscle. At the bottom, or floor, of the core are your pelvic floor muscles. When all muscles are healthy, everything works well together as you go about your normal daily life. If you lose any one part of your core, think of putting a hole in a closed pop can, all of a sudden you no longer have a closed system! This is how pelvic floor dysfunction can sometimes contribute to back pain, the body no longer has a stable support system.

Women’s health conditions we treat:
- Incontinence (both stress and urge incontinence)
- Pelvic organ prolapse
- Pelvic pain
- Pregnancy related musculoskeletal conditions (ie. Back pain, sciatica)
- Post-partum pain
- Osteoporosis
- Side effects from chemotherapy and radiation treatment

Physical therapy techniques for women’s health conditions:
- Biofeedback
- Manual therapy techniques
- Therapeutic exercise and muscle re-education
- Behavioral interventions/education to help promote healthy bladder habits
- Postural training

Who will be my Women’s Health Physical Therapist?

Rachel Polito, DPT, ATC, OCS

Rachel grew up outside of Baltimore, Maryland and received her Bachelor of Science in Athletic Training and Exercise Science from the University of Delaware in 2008 and earned her Doctorate in Physical Therapy from Duke University in 2011. In 2014, she earned the designation as a Board Certified Orthopedic Specialist (OCS). Rachel has always had an interest in treating orthopedic conditions, but became interested in pursuing advanced education in women’s health after having her daughter. Rachel has completed coursework through the APTA’s Section on Women’s Health for the treatment of these conditions.