



## Pelvic Floor Disorders -Information Sheet

The **UBC Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology** is improving the quality of life of women suffering from pelvic floor disorders by conducting research aimed at developing new prevention and treatment strategies and by training the next generation of specialists to provide exemplary care to patients.

The pelvic floor is an integrated system where dysfunction of one aspect can negatively impact others. Accurate diagnosis is the initial step to successful treatment. Therapeutic goals focus on the relief of patient symptoms to allow women to return to a normal healthy lifestyle. These are achieved through a variety of conservative (non-surgical) and surgical treatment options.



Conditions associated with pelvic floor disorders range from urinary and fecal incontinence to pelvic organ prolapse and sexual dysfunction. Although not life threatening, symptoms have a profoundly negative impact on quality of life, often leading to social isolation and depression. In fact, urinary and fecal incontinence are the leading reasons for admission to a nursing home.

Despite the prevalence of pelvic floor disorders, many women are reluctant to seek treatment because of stigma associated with the condition. A majority of women do not know how common the problem is much less that it is has a name and that there is a field of medicine that aims to diagnose and treat their condition.

**DID YOU KNOW:** Pelvic floor disorders are more common than high blood pressure, depression or diabetes. Of adult women, one in three has hypertension, one in twenty has depression and one in ten suffers from diabetes. Yet more than one in two women has some form of pelvic floor dysfunction.



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## Urogynaecology: A New Sub-specialty

Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery, or Urogynaecology, is a relatively new field in medicine that combines the interests of Urology and Gynaecology to address the specific health needs of women with pelvic floor disorders. The demand for this new focus has exploded due to an increase in life expectancy of the female population in North America and beyond, trends that have significantly increased the patient population suffering from these conditions.



Diagnosis and management of pelvic floor dysfunction require skills that go beyond those offered in normal Gynaecology or Urology residency programs. These concerns require combining aspects of urology, colorectal and plastic surgery, gastroenterology, neurology, radiology and gynaecology.

### Further Information

If you are interested in joining a mailing list for information on pelvic floor disorders and what you can do to prevent or alleviate symptoms please contact Sue Barber by phone at 604 806 9684 or by email at sbarber@providencehealth.bc.ca.

### Investing in Improved Health Care for Canadian Women and Beyond

The Department is urgently seeking philanthropic support to establish an endowed fund to advance research and training in Pelvic Floor Disorders. Donations to this new fund will ensure the Department has the resources required to launch innovative studies, recruit research support staff and trainees, and purchase equipment and supplies, all of which are essential to accelerating the discovery of new treatments and educating future specialists in the field.

To support research and training in Pelvic Floor Disorders in the UBC Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, please contact Laura Ralph at 604-827-4728 or [laura.ralph@ubc.ca](mailto:laura.ralph@ubc.ca). To donate online, please visit: <http://obgyn.ubc.ca/giving/>.



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