

# Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy

## CONSTIPATION AND FECAL INCONTINENCE

Constipation is when you have a bowel movement (poop) fewer than three times per week. Sometimes you will have belly pain, usually in the left lower side of your stomach. It might be difficult or painful to have a bowel movement, and your stools (poop) could be lumpy, hard and small. Usually, you have to push or strain to get the stool out, and you might have bloating and feel uncomfortable. Straining to have a bowel movement can lead to other problems like hemorrhoids or tears in the skin. While people 65 years or older are more likely to experience constipation, it can impact anyone, including children, as well as women, commonly after childbirth. Constipation also affects people taking certain medications like pain medications, especially opioids.

### SOME FACTORS THAT AFFECT CONSTIPATION:

- Nutrition
- Fluid intake
- Fiber intake
- Physical activity
- Medications

Fecal incontinence is when you have an urge to have a bowel movement but you cannot make it to the toilet in time. Or you might leak stool from your rectum with or without your knowledge or ability to control it.

### CAUSES OF FECAL INCONTINENCE CAN INCLUDE:

- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Pelvic floor dysfunction
- Damage to anal sphincter muscle or nerves

### WHAT TO EXPECT:

Before your first visit, please complete forms that list your history, current symptoms and concerns. This information will help the physical therapist with your evaluation. At your initial physical therapy visit, you and your therapist will discuss any concerns.

### EVALUATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

- Posture
- Pain
- Breathing
- Strength
- Flexibility
- Bladder and bowel routine
- Nutrition, fluid intake, fiber intake, physical activities and medications

Education is a big part of physical therapy and can include reviewing the structure of pelvic floor muscles, handouts, and instruction/training for a home exercise program.

The therapist will explain all evaluation and treatment options to help you make informed decisions, and your healthcare team will work with you and your referring healthcare provider to determine your plan of care.

### SCHEDULING AN APPOINTMENT:

Talk to your healthcare provider about your concerns and request a referral for pelvic floor physical therapy. You can return the referral in person, by fax or email to the Keck Center. Most insurance plans are accepted. Before your first visit, be sure to contact your insurance provider to discuss any out-of-pocket expenses.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

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