



Pelvic Organ Prolapse (POP)



What is it?

The female pelvic organs include the bladder, uterus, and rectum. These organs are supported by a group of muscles that act like a hammock to keep them in place. POP occurs when weakness in the pelvic floor muscles allows any combination of these organs to drop down in the pelvis.

Medical Terminology:

Cystocele: Prolapse of the bladder into the anterior wall of the vagina

Rectocele: Prolapse of the rectum into the posterior wall of the vagina

Uterine Prolapse: Downward protrusion of the uterus into the vagina



Who is affected?

1 in 3 women experience POP

Two major risk factors for the development of POP include prior pregnancy or vaginal delivery. Other risk factors include a history of pelvic surgeries, age, heavy weight lifting, obesity, prolonged cough, constipation, or any other activity that leads to chronically elevated intra-abdominal pressures.



How is it diagnosed?

POP may be diagnosed by your clinician in the office with a detailed history and physical exam. Women commonly report a sensation of pressure or bulging from down below. However, sometimes the only symptoms are trouble urinating in the form of urgency, frequency, leakage or incomplete emptying. POP can also cause constipation, pain with sex, and frequent urinary tract infections.



How is it treated?

Treatment of POP depends on the severity of symptoms and degree of prolapse. Conservative management includes behavioral modification such as, Kegel exercises and pelvic floor physical therapy. Pessaries are devices that may be inserted into the vagina to support the pelvic organs and hold them in place. Finally, surgery is an option when other treatments do not provide adequate symptom relief.

Sources

<https://www.urologyhealth.org/healthy-living/urologyhealth-extra/magazine-archives/fall-2021/did-you-know-pelvic-organ-prolapse-is-more-common-than-you-think>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK563229/>