

Pelvic Floor Health Index (PFHI) Tool

A Tool for Patients

You've been a parent for **six months or more** now, but maybe you're still feeling like something's not quite right down there. Are you worried if it's normal? After having a baby, you might notice new or worsened pelvic floor issues. Pregnancy and vaginal childbirth are two important risk factors for this.

Symptoms may include:

- **leakage of urine,**
- **stool or gas leakage,**
- **a bulge in the vagina,**
- **pelvic pain,**
- **pain with sexual intercourse,**
- **decreased sensation,**
- **decreased sense of attractiveness, and/or avoidance of intimacy.**

These symptoms are not normal, and may not necessarily get better on their own. While we know there is sustained improvement for about a year postpartum, there are early interventions that may help speed up your recovery. If one or more of these symptoms bother you, please keep reading!

The Pelvic Floor Health Index (PFHI) tool is a new screening questionnaire to evaluate your pelvic floor concerns.

The PFHI is a short 10-question survey with yes/no questions that you can complete on your own or with your healthcare provider.

You can find the tool by visiting the link below.

[Optimal Postpartum Pelvic Floor: Am I There Yet?](#)

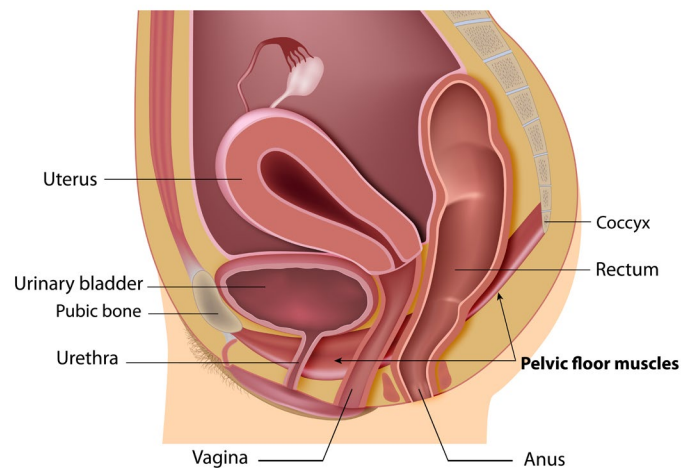


Figure 1. Female Pelvic Floor.



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Circle the answer which best describes you:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. In the past month, have you had leakage of urine? | YES / NO |
| 2. In the past month, have you had leakage of stool? | YES / NO |
| 3. In the past month, have you had leakage of gas from your rectum? | YES / NO |
| 4. In the past month, have you had a ball or bulge of tissue that you can see or feel falling out of your vagina? | YES / NO |
| 5. In the past month, have you had pain on the outside of your vagina, or between vaginal and anal openings? | YES / NO |
| 6. In the past month, have you had pain inside your vagina? | YES / NO |
| 7. In the past month, have you had pain during sexual intercourse? | YES / NO /
NOT SEXUALLY ACTIVE* |
| 8. In the past month, have you had decreasing sensation in your genital area during sexual intercourse? | YES / NO /
NOT SEXUALLY ACTIVE* |
| 9. In the past month, have you had decreasing sense of attractiveness in your genital area? | YES / NO /
NOT SEXUALLY ACTIVE* |
| 10. In the past month, have you had avoidance of intimate situations or sexual activity with your partner? | YES / NO /
NOT SEXUALLY ACTIVE* |



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Scoring: YES/NOT SEXUALLY ACTIVE=0; NO=1;

Score of 10/10 is return to optimal pelvic floor health postpartum

* If you respond both YES and NOT SEXUALLY ACTIVE, lack of sexual activity can be interpreted as a direct consequence of pain, decreasing sensation or decreasing sense of attractiveness respectively.

If you respond both NO and NOT SEXUALLY ACTIVE, lack of sexual activity can be interpreted as caused by different reasons. This questionnaire captures sexual difficulties due to pelvic floor issues, and does not address other issues that may impact sexual activities.

If you answer NO on all the questions, this gives you a score of 10/10 indicating return to optimal pelvic floor health 6 months postpartum or beyond. You may choose to continue **Kegel's exercises** to maintain your pelvic floor strength and function.

A score of less than 10/10 indicates that your pelvic floor functioning has not returned to baseline in the postpartum period. We would encourage you to speak to your family doctor for a referral to a pelvic floor health specialist (e.g. pelvic floor physiotherapist, sexual health counsellor, and/or urogynecologist).

If you are interested in learning more about the research behind the tool, please visit www.bepelvichealthaware.ca

References

- 1 Geoffrion, R., Badowski, S., Gong, M., Mann, G., Tilak, M., Koenig, N., & Lee, T. (2023). Pelvic Floor Health Index: Initial validation of a practical postpartum tool for busy clinicians. *Canadian family physician Medecin de famille canadien*, 69(11), e229-e235. <https://doi.org/10.46747/cfp.6911e229>
- 2 Alia Medical Media. (2013). Female pelvic floor labeled [Illustration]. Shutterstock. <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-illustration/female-pelvic-floor-labeled-157672304>



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