

# Pelvic Floor Dialogues

So I pee a little  
when I laugh. That's  
normal right?

Everyone talks about  
Kegels. Do they really work?  
How much is enough?

How has my body  
changed "down there"  
since I had my baby?

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## Pillow Talk

Next time you’re snuggling with your love sharing those oh-so-private thoughts, surprise them with your knowledge about female “come.” Though we don’t often think of women ejaculating when they reach orgasm, women do get wet “down there” when they get aroused. And, as we all know, this natural lubricant intensifies the “yes-yes-yes” of sex. Ever wonder, exactly what’s in those fluids? Well, for nearly 70 years, scientists have studied just that! And, they found that as we reach orgasm, women are multi-tasking. We may:

- Release female ejaculate, which contains a substance that helps dissolve mucus, making it easier for sperm to reach our wombs.
- Squirt tiny amounts of urine. No biggie, totally natural.
- Leak urine, called coital incontinence. Not normal, talk with your health care provider about this symptom. Urine leakage with sex is more common for women with stress urinary incontinence (SUI). SUI is urine leakage with physical activity such as laughing, sneezing, lifting, or exercise.

If anal sex is part of your bedroom fun, take heed from the experience of 1,000 women. This group of 30 to 60-year olds were mostly white, married women. One in three had tried anal sex at least once. More than 1 in 10 enjoyed it on a regular basis. Might this activity increase your risk for accidental bowel leakage (ABL)? ABL is leakage of stool (fecal incontinence) or stool and gas (anal incontinence). Women who routinely engaged in anal sex, had less firm bowel movements. And, about 1 in 10 of these women had an episode of ABL after anal sex. Overall, ABL was more common among women who had anal sex compared with those who only had vaginal sex.

**Not able to talk with your honey about these intimate topics?** Then, talk with your health care provider:

- Download a free fact sheet on [how to talk with your provider about pelvic floor disorders](#).
- Read more about ABL. If you have symptoms, [download a fact sheet](#) to bring with you to your next doctor’s appointment.



## The Sleep Aid Contest: Nerve Stimulation vs. PFME

Getting up to pee frequently during the night, or nocturia, can really disrupt a good night's sleep. In hopes of finding a helpful non-drug therapy, 40 women participated in a 3-month study. The research compared the following two treatments:

- Nerve stimulation, which uses a small device to send tiny electrical pulses to the nerves in the bladder area. This therapy already helps many women control urine leakage.
- Pelvic floor muscle exercises (PFME). Also called Kegels, these exercises strengthen the muscles of the pelvic floor. Regular daily exercising of the pelvic muscles can improve and even prevent urine leakage.

And the winner is...it's a tie. Both groups of women experienced improved quality of sleep. So, if the need "to go" is getting you up at night, talk with your doctor. Ask what therapy might be best for you. In the meantime, start working those pelvic muscles:

- Watch a [video about how to do pelvic floor exercises](#).
- Download a [fact sheet on pelvic floor muscle exercises](#).

## Is POP “Dragging” You Down?

More than 200 women, age 23 to 84 years, agreed to help doctors better understand the symptoms of [pelvic organ prolapse](#) (POP). POP is dropping of the pelvic organs, such as the bladder, uterus and rectum, caused by a loss of vaginal support. Common symptoms are a vaginal lump or bulge. But, some women say they feel a dragging sensation. Is this also a sign of POP?

Researchers looked at the link between this heavy feeling and a diagnosis of POP. Half of the volunteers in the study received a diagnosis of POP. Among those with POP, one in four women felt the dragging sensation. The conclusion: Vaginal lump or bulge is a common symptom of POP. A dragging sensation is also a symptom.



- Watch a [video interview](#) with Drs. Victoria Handa and Gunhilde Buchsbaum about pelvic organ prolapse.
- Download POP factsheet—[regular font](#) or [large print version](#).
- Find a [pelvic floor expert](#).

## SUI: Up, Up and Away

“Up, up and away. My beautiful, my beautiful balloon.” If you have SUI, this old ditty might soon become your new theme song. A recent study found that a balloon device may be a new option for controlling SUI.

Two hundred women, who either could not or opted not to have SUI surgery, participated in the study. Half of the group received balloon therapy. The other half a placebo treatment. After 3 months of treatment, women in the balloon group had the option to call it quits or continue in the study for another 9 months. Most of the women (2 out of 3) stayed with the balloon treatment for the full year. One in three of these women found that the amount of urine they typically leaked was about half.

**How does a bladder balloon procedure work?** The doctor puts the tiny balloon into the bladder through the ureter, which is the tube from the bladder to the outside of the body that urine passes through during urination. Once in place, the balloon acts as a cushion. Pressure on the bladder due to coughing, laughing or activity may cause urine to leak. By absorbing that added pressure, the balloon helps to reduce leakage. Balloon therapy is not without side effects. For example, in this study, some of the women had pain when they peed or trouble urinating after the balloon was placed. The bottom line: more research is needed before this treatment goes main stream. At this time, the device is pending approval of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use with patients outside of this clinical trial. We'll keep you posted as we learn more!

- Read answers to [frequently asked questions about bladder control](#).
- Download free [fact sheet about stress urinary incontinence](#).

## Around the Web

- [Coping with urinary incontinence.](#)
- [Pessary use in stress urinary incontinence:](#) A review of advantages, complications, patient satisfaction, and quality of life.
- Study advances [research in pelvic organ prolapse](#) among women.
- It's time to talk about [accidental bowel leakage.](#)

## The Rest of the Story

- Dietz HP, Chatel C, Atan IK. [Is a “dragging sensation” a symptom of female pelvic organ prolapse?](#) Int Urogynecol J. May 2018; 29(5): 703–707.
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- Geynisman-Tan J, Kenton K, Leader-Cramer A, Dave B, et al. [Anal penetrative intercourse as a risk factor for fecal incontinence.](#) Female Pelvic Med Reconstr Surg: May/June 2018; 24(3): 252–255.
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- Zlatko Pastor E, Roman Chmel. Differential diagnostics of [female “sexual” fluids:](#) a narrative review. Int Urogynecol J. May 2018; 29(5): 621–629.

## Voices for PFDs—5 Ways to Get Help and Support



If you haven't been on the site recently, check out [voicesforpfd.org](#) today:

1. Read interviews with real women who have had [surgery for stress urinary incontinence](#) (SUI).
2. Watch videos with [expert pelvic floor doctors](#).
3. Check out the expanded [glossary](#) of medical terms explained in plain language.
4. Download [free patient education materials](#).
5. [Join the confidential Voices for PFD community](#)—talk with other patients and learn from their experiences.