

# Pelvic Floor Dialogues

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

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

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

ISSUE 5

## Pelvic Floor Dialogues

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### In this issue

- Excess Weight Increases Your Risk of PRDs
- Women in China and Brazil Struggle with UI
- FAQs on Slings for SUI
- Women with POP Find Pessaries Helpful in Controlling Bowel Symptoms
- The Rest of the Story

### Excess Weight Increases Your Risk of PFDs



Another reason to shed those extra pounds - Maintaining a healthy weight can help prevent pelvic floor disorders (PFDs). Though lots of factors can increase your risk for PFDs, like genetics, age, and number of births, being obese and overweight put women at a greater risk for these pelvic floor problems. In the same way that excess weight can strain your knees, those added pounds apply extra pressure on your abdominal floor. This stresses the pelvic floor. Obesity also affects the normal functioning of the nerves and muscles in your genital tract. This further increases your risk for pelvic floor disorders. Print out a free fact sheet about lifestyle and behavioral changes. And, watch those portion sizes, go for the healthy choice, and get moving!

## Women in China and Brazil Struggle with UI

Researchers in China studied the challenges of living with stress urinary incontinence (SUI), urine leakage after coughing, laughing, sneezing, or lifting a heavy object . More than three hundred Chinese women with SUI were in the study. The findings? Feeling embarrassed, many of the women put off seeing a doctor. The shame and perceived stigma of SUI increased the severity of their symptoms. It also reduced their quality of life.

Ten thousand miles away, at a hospital in Brazil, urologists interviewed 61 women with multiple sclerosis (MS), an autoimmune disease which affects the brain and the spinal cord. Urinary incontinence (UI) is common with MS. Among this group of women, more than two-thirds had UI. However, very few of the women had seen a specialist, e.g., a urogynecologist or urologist, about their urinary problems. These studies highlight the need to talk with your doctor about incontinence issues. Find out how other women start the conversation with their healthcare providers by connecting with others online . And, download tips on talking with your doctor . Bring it with you to your next appointment. Let the nurse or tech who checks your vitals know that you want to discuss UI with your doctor.

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## FAQs on Slings for SUI

Need answers to your questions about mesh slings?

- Check out the FAQs jointly published by the American Urogynecological Society (AUGS) and the Society of Urodynamics, Female Pelvic Medicine & Urogenital Reconstruction (SUFU).
- Ask your doctor about the potential risks of different SUI sling surgeries. For example, tears in your bladder, movement of the mesh, and pain in your groin and thigh area.

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## Women with POP Find Pessaries Helpful in Controlling Bowel Symptoms

Bowel symptoms are common with pelvic organ prolapse (POP), or weakness or damage to the normal support of the pelvic floor. More than 100 women took part in a study on the use of pessaries to help control these bowel problems. A pessary is a plastic device which lifts the bladder or applies compression to the urethra to reduce leakage. Only half of those women stayed with the study for the full 12-months. This group tended to be older with more advanced stages of POP. The bottom line? Pessaries helped to improve bowel symptoms. The women also reported improved quality of life with regards to bowel problems.

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## The Rest of the Story

Interested in reading more? Check out the sources below:

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