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UPCOMING EVENTS

March 18th, 2010

@5:30pm

Coping with the Psychological and Physical Effects of Pelvic Pain

Speakers: Nancy Fish, MSW,

MPH, LCSW and Niva Herzig, PT

Core Dynamics Physical Therapy 177 North Dean Street, # 302 Englewood, NJ 07631 (201) 568-5060

Pelvic Floor Dysfunction

Pelvic floor dysfunction (PFD) refers to conditions which involve the pelvic floor muscles (muscles which surround the vagina and rectum) when they do not function "normally." This may be seen as laxity and low tone in the muscles and surrounding tissues or spasms and increased tone in the muscles.

The pelvic floor is composed of the musculature and pelvis.

The function of these muscles is to support the viscera (organs) in the area, provide sphincter control (helping maintain continence) and improving sexual activity.

Symptoms of PFD may include pelvic pain, genital pain, urinary and/or bowel dysfunction and sexual dysfunction. Patients may complain of dyspareunia (painful intercourse), painful sitting, low back

pain, incontinence and/or prolapse. Patients are also commonly (but not limited to) referred during pregnancy or postpartum, post Hysterectomy or post Prostatectomy.

Pelvic Floor Dysfunction can affect women and men of all ages.

Stay Healthy During Pregnancy, Benefit Afterwards

Staying healthy while you are pregnant is not only beneficial to your baby, but to you too. What does staying healthy mean? A combination of proper diet, exercise and sleep.

Caloric increase only needs to occur during the 2nd and 3rd trimesters and by 300 calories. Take in fluids regularly and continue eating meals consisting of all food groups, keeping sugars at a minimum. Include fruits and vegetables, whole grains and protein. Remember to eat foods

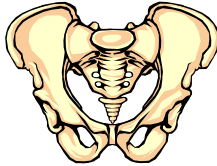
rich in Calcium, Iron, Folic Acid and Vitamin C. Postpartum, continue eating a well balanced diet and increase fluids especially if breast feeding. For more specific issues and concerns speak with your physician or consult with a nutritionist. Staying active is very beneficial to you and your baby. Before you begin any new exercise program while you are pregnant, you should always consult your physician. Stop any exercise if you notice dizziness, faint, shortness

of breath, vaginal bleeding or pain. Avoid any exercise that may injure your abdomen or ones involving increased jumping and bouncing or contact sports. A few exercises I recommend which will benefit you during your pregnancy and afterwards include:

1. Opposite Arm and Leg Raises: Involves both back and abdominal muscles and performed on all fours. Maintain a neutral spine and tightened abdominals, raise one arm straight out in front to shoulder level and the opposite leg to buttock level at the same time.

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What is Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy?



When most people go to their physician regards to some pelvic pain, the last thing they think they will hear is a referral to a physical therapist. Did you know that physical therapists can also treat pelvic pain due to Pelvic Floor Dysfunction (PFD)? Not all physical therapists treat PFD. You need to be evaluated and treated by one who specializes in this area. Now that you have the

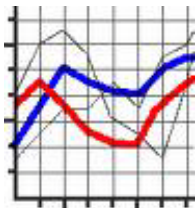
appointment made, what is to be expected? After taking a thorough history, the physical therapist will begin their hands on evaluation. This may include posture assessment and orthopedic screening, muscle strength testing, lower extremity flexibility, range of motion and biofeedback. Soft tissue palpation of the muscles surrounding the pelvic girdle and the pelvic

floor will assess myofascial restrictions, trigger points and connective tissue mobility. How does the physical therapist assess the pelvic floor muscles? First, an external assessment of the pelvic floor muscles can be done by palpation and visualization. The patient will be asked to contract, relax and bulge these muscles.

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Biofeedback: How can it Help Pelvic Floor Issues?

Biofeedback is a non-invasive technique which allows you to learn to control body functions such as muscle tension and relaxation (muscle activity). Sensors are placed on the body and in return these sensors provide a feedback, a reading, seen on a monitor for the patient to see. Biofeedback has been commonly used for treatment of headaches, anxiety and pain. Biofeedback can help treat pelvic floor issues such as incontinence (urinary and fecal), pelvic pain and constipation.



“Biofeedback...allows you to learn to control body functions such as muscle tension and relaxation....”

In all types of pelvic floor issues, the physical therapist commonly notices the patient incorrectly using the pelvic floor muscles. Most often, the patient tightens the abdominals the gluteals or the legs. Additionally,

patients hold their breath as they try to contract the pelvic floor muscles.

With pelvic floor issues, sensors can be placed externally on either side of the anus where it is easier to pick up the pelvic muscles or internally via a vaginal or rectal sensor. Additionally, a sensor may be placed on the abdomen to monitor how these muscles are used in the process. Once the set up is complete, a graph (visual) and/or auditory signals will be used to aid in the learning process for the patient; he or she will be able to see which muscles are being used.

Patients with incontinence use the biofeedback machine to perform pelvic floor exercises. The patient will be able to see on the monitor when they contract the correct

muscles. The graph will allow the patient to know how much muscle activity is occurring and length of time they are able to contract. If the additional sensor is used on the abdomen, the patient will see whether they are using these muscles instead of the pelvic floor muscles.

Patients with pelvic pain often see a high reading at rest as their resting tone may be elevated. Just as with incontinence, these patients also need to learn how to use the pelvic floor muscles. More importantly, they usually need to learn how to relax them. The physical therapist commonly sees a difficulty in contracting and letting go of the muscles in this patient population.

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Stay Healthy During Pregnancy, Benefit Afterwards

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Repeat the exercise with the opposite arm and leg.

2. Pelvic Floor Exercises

(Kegels): Keep the pelvic muscles in shape and can be done during pregnancy and afterwards. Practice quick (1-2 second) contractions as well as longer held (5-10 seconds) contractions. Rest between contractions and do not hold your breath as you are doing this (or any) exercise.

3. **Abdominal Contractions:** To keep the abdomen strong, perform these exercises in any position (sitting, standing, all 4's or on the back when it is still safe

and comfortable). As you exhale, bring your lower abdomen, belly button and below, towards the spine. Imagine a string pulling your belly button towards your spine.

4. **Squat:** Strengthens the legs and buttocks. This can be performed with or without the support of a wall/chair. Stand with feet hip width apart (increase the width when balance becomes challenging). Keep your heels flat on the floor and toes slightly turned out as you bend your hips and knees lowering yourself downward. Make sure your knees stay over the toes.

5. **Stretching:** Stretching can help ease some aches occurring

during and after pregnancy.

Some stretches to include in your program are full squat and angry cat.

6. **Breathing:** Inhale air through the nose, and down low into the abdomen. Let the abdomen expand as you breathe in, and relax as you breathe out through your mouth.

Do not forget to rest and get good nights of sleep. Stay active while pregnant as long as you are comfortable, but also make sure not to overdo it. By balancing your diet, activity and sleep, you are bound to feel good during and after the pregnancy.



“Staying active is very beneficial to you and your baby.”

Recommendations: Here is some of ours!

Books:

- Headache in the Pelvis
- The V Book
- The Interstitial Cystitis Survival Guide: Your Guide to the Latest Treatment Options and Coping Strategies
- Women's Waterworks: Curing Incontinence: Step-by-Step Method for Women of All Ages

Organizations:

- National Vulvodynia Association

- Interstitial Cystitis Network
- Interstitial Cystitis Association
- International Pelvic Pain Society
- Endometriosis Association
- American Physical Therapy Section on Women's Health

Useful Websites:

- www.vaginismus.com
- www.coccyx.org
- www.ourgyn.com
- www.vulvodyniasupport.com

- All listed organizations have wonderful websites too

Self Treatment Tools:

- Crystal Wand
- Dilators
- Theracane
- Tennis or racquet ball
- Foam roll

Relief Items:

- Theraseat
- Tush Cush
- Ice Packs
- Hot Packs

Core Dynamics Physical Therapy

177 North Dean Street
Suite 302
Englewood, NJ 07631

PHONE:
(201) 568-5060

FAX:
(201) 568-5061

E-MAIL:
info@coredynamicspt.com



We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.coredynamicspt.com

What Have We Done?

Here we would like to let all our readers know what we have been doing since our last newsletter. Since the fall, Core Dynamics Physical Therapy has been involved in events. In November 2009, we attended Babyfest at the Wyckoff YMCA. This fair is dedicated to expected moms and their partners. Small instructional sessions were held throughout the day, such as Niva Herzig, PT teaching about Kegels and also about the

abdominal muscles postpartum.

Niva has also blogged several topics on <http://nannymama.com/blog/>.

Our brochures have been updated and given a new look; Thanks to Michael and Alpha Dog Solutions.

Niva has also been recertified from BCIA (Biofeedback Certification Institute of America-Pelvic Muscle Dysfunction

Biofeedback).

Finally, continuing education is an essential part of a NJ physical therapist's ongoing licensing. Core Dynamics Physical Therapy hosted a course: "Orthopedic Management of Pelvic Pain", taught by Peter Philip, PT. Niva attended this course as well as recently participating in an online course, "Beyond Kegels."

Biofeedback: How can it Help Pelvic Floor Issues?

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With constipation, we also see a difficulty in relaxation or an inappropriate contraction of the pelvic floor muscles while attempting to

defecate. Again, biofeedback can help these patients regain control of their muscles. Used in combination with manual therapy,

exercises, lifestyle changes and physiological quieting, biofeedback can be a helpful tool in overcoming pelvic floor issues.

About Our Organization...

Core Dynamics Physical Therapy provides experience and passion in addressing pelvic floor muscle dysfunction in women and men of all ages, pre-natal and

postpartum care.

Mission: To provide an environment where women and men of all ages can receive one on one hands on treatment,

where they can be listened to and cared for according to their symptoms. This is a place where they learn to be more functional and return to their recreational activities.

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**CORE DYNAMICS
PHYSICAL THERAPY**
177 North Dean Street
Suite 302
Englewood, NJ 07631

