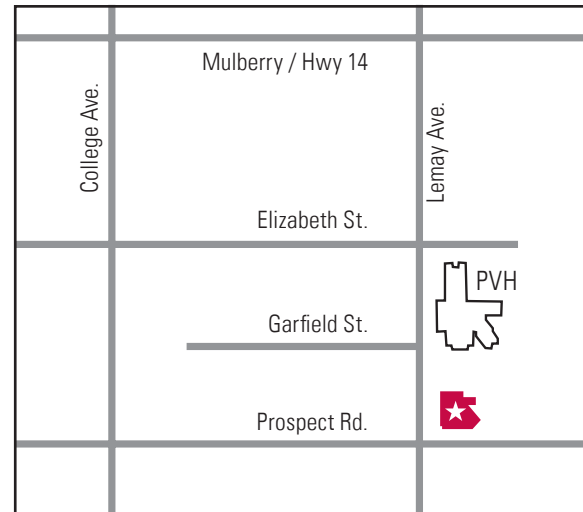


# Suggestions to Help *Improve* Continence

- Perform kegel exercises regularly to strengthen your pelvic floor muscles.
- Drink six to eight glasses of water per day.
- Check medicine side effects — some medicines may cause you to urinate more often.
- Go to the bathroom before exercise, strenuous activity and sex.
- Avoid constipation — eat food high in fiber.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol — they can irritate the bladder.
- Normally, adults urinate six to eight times per day. Urinate every three to four hours for good bladder health.
- For women, pelvic pain and incontinence should end within six to eight weeks after your baby is born.
- Men can also have incontinence (after prostate surgery, for example). Exercising to strengthen pelvic floor muscles can help after surgery.
- If you have incontinence with activities, have difficulty delaying urination or have pelvic pain, talk to your doctor about options for treatment. Medicines, physical therapy (including biofeedback training), surgery and other treatments are available to help improve bladder control and pain.

Directions to  
**University Of Colorado Health  
Rehabilitation Services**



**★ Rehabilitation Services**

1106 E. Prospect Road, Suite 200  
Fort Collins, CO 80524  
**970.495.8454**



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# Incontinence GUIDE



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## Learning to control incontinence

For some men and women incontinence can be a serious problem that limits their activities and disrupts their life.

Incontinence means you can't control your need to go to the bathroom. It is not a normal part of aging and physical therapy can be beneficial for some individuals.

In both men and women the muscles in your pelvis can be weakened by surgery. In women, the pelvic floor muscles can be weakened by childbirth and the hormonal changes of menopause.

The two primary types of urinary incontinence are:

- Urge incontinence.
- Stress incontinence.

Urge incontinence occurs when you suddenly feel the need to go to the bathroom or cannot control the urge to go.

Stress incontinence occurs when a person loses bladder control during physical activity or exertion (coughing, sneezing, walking/running, sports).

Doing exercises to strengthen the muscles in the pelvis can help both types of incontinence. The physical therapist will help develop an exercise program for home and during your clinic appointment with the use of biofeedback. Education in diet and bladder retraining can also be helpful.

[uhealth.org](http://uhealth.org)

## Pelvic pain

Some women and men experience pain in the pelvis for a variety of reasons. Physical therapy can help in several ways. You will learn and receive:

- Exercises to improve the muscle control in the pelvis.
- Relaxation techniques, including biofeedback.
- Techniques and modalities to release scar tissue and muscle tightness that can cause pain or limit sexual activity.

## Pelvic floor exercises (Kegel exercises)

Kegel exercises should be performed by all women, especially during pregnancy, after birth and during menopause. Men can also benefit from a stronger pelvic floor to manage overall continence. Strengthening these muscles improves urinary continence, supports your back and can increase sexual pleasure.

- To find your pelvic floor muscles, try and stop your urine from flowing while seated on the toilet. **THIS IS NOT AN EXERCISE** — consistently stopping your urine flow is not healthy for your bladder.
- Lie on your back with your knees bent up. Tighten your muscles as though stopping your urine from flowing or holding back gas. Place your hand on your pubic bone and feel it draw in as the muscles contract. Keep your legs, buttocks and abdominal muscles relaxed.



- Hold the contraction for five to ten seconds. The goal is to hold for 10 seconds.
- Relax for 15 to 20 seconds; learning to relax these muscles can be as important as learning to contract them.

- The goal is to be able to perform 10 exercises, three to four times per day. As you feel stronger, you may do the exercises while sitting or standing.
- You can also perform quick contractions where you tighten the pelvic floor for only one to two seconds. Repeat 10 times. This can help improve bladder control.

## Physical therapy services

Physical therapy can help women and men with incontinence difficulties. It can also help relieve pelvic pain. Biofeedback, electrical stimulation and other techniques can help with incontinence and pelvic pain by strengthening pelvic floor muscles.

If you have difficulty with these issues, talk to your healthcare provider. Many insurance companies require a referral from your health care provider to cover physical therapy. Our clinic accepts most insurance plans. You can verify insurance coverage and need for a referral by calling your insurance company or our office.

**To schedule an appointment, contact us at 970.495.8454.**

