

## What are Pelvic Floor Disorders?

Pelvic floor disorders are common disorders affecting many women and it is important to acknowledge these disorders should be treated and not just tolerated. These disorders are often treatable, and Southern Urogynecology offers a number of comprehensive services to meet your needs.

A pelvic floor disorder (PFD) occurs when the muscles or connective tissues of the pelvic area weaken or are injured. There are many different conditions that present themselves within this category. The most common pelvic floor disorders are urinary incontinence, fecal incontinence, and pelvic organ prolapse. PFDs are more common among older women.

The NICHD (National Institute of Child Health & Human Development) supports and conducts research on PFDs. For example, NICHD-supported studies evaluate therapies for PFDs and fine-tune ways to measure treatment outcomes and patient satisfaction. As of 2008, it was reported that nearly a quarter of women have a pelvic floor disorder, which can be (urinary or fecal) or pelvic organ prolapse (when the uterus or another pelvic organ drops from its usual position and pushes against the walls of the vagina).

The older a woman gets, the higher her chance of a pelvic floor disorder. The likelihood of a pelvic floor disorder is higher for women who are obese and for women who have given birth.

### Overview

The dropping of the vaginal walls along with the surrounding pelvic organs including:

- Bladder (Cystocele prolapse)
- Uterus (Uterine prolapse)
- Vagina (Vaginal prolapse)
- Small bowel (Enterocoele prolapse)
- Rectum (Rectocele prolapse)

### Causes

Weakened or damaged pelvic floor muscles from:

- Childbirth
- Increased pressure on your pelvic floor muscles
- Being overweight
- Frequent constipation

### Symptoms

- General discomfort when standing or engaging in activity
- Feeling of pressure against the vaginal wall
- Organs or a bulge protruding through the vaginal opening
- Feeling full in your lower stomach
- Stretching or pulling in your groin
- Urinary leakage
- Pain during intercourse