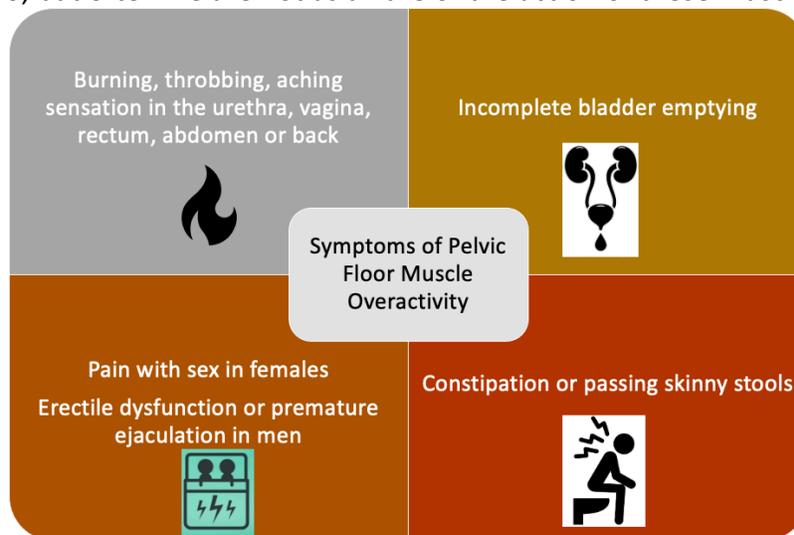


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What is Pelvic Floor Muscle Overactivity?

- Condition where there may be increased tension in the muscles of your pelvic floor or a decreased ability to fully relax the muscles.
 - Imagine if you always had increased tension or could not fully relax your bicep, your arm would start to hurt! This is what can happen in the pelvic floor muscles too, but often we are not as aware of the action of these muscles.



What can cause pelvic floor muscle overactivity?

- The short answer, it's complex! Some common causes and examples are:
 - **Injury**, such as a hip injury that never fully healed.
 - **Infection**, such as repeated UTIs
 - **Chronic tension patterns**: certain postures or learned behaviors cause people to continually tense their abdominal or pelvic floor muscles.
 - **Past pelvic surgery**: scar tissue after surgery can irritate muscles, ligaments, and nerves in the pelvic floor.
 - **Trauma**: including a fall onto the tail bone which can cause the muscles around the area to tighten or trauma such as sexual abuse
 - **Stress**: tension from stress can be held in your pelvic floor. Just like you may get neck pain or a headache when you are stressed due to the tension in your neck, so too can your pelvic floor become tense and painful in times of stress.
 - **Bowel or bladder dysfunction**: Pelvic floor muscles often must work overtime to hold the bowel or bladder movements. This can occur in times when you may be going too often or not enough.



How is pelvic floor muscle overactivity diagnosed?

- You provider will assess your symptoms, ask questions about your bowel movements, urination, and sexual activity.
- It is important to seek out a provider you feel comfortable openly sharing any concerns or issues you are having.
- Your provider will likely do a physical exam which may include visual inspection of your pelvic area to assess how you contract and relax your muscles, a digital vaginal and rectal exam to exam the muscles in your pelvic floor.

Possible Treatments:

- This is a complex issue which often requires a team of providers from different disciplines which may include gynecology, physical medicine and rehabilitation, gastroenterology, psychology, and physical therapy.
- Pelvic floor physical therapy is typically key to help retrain and strengthen your pelvic floor muscles.
- Practicing relaxation techniques can also be helpful in decreasing tension in your body, including the pelvic muscles.
- Stretches such as child's pose or the happy baby position. Talk with your provider about specific stretches that may benefit you!

