



Pelvic Health Support



Anyone can be affected by pelvic floor health problems during or after pregnancy, including accidental bladder or bowel leakage (incontinence) and prolapse. Help and support is available to you.

The pelvic floor

The tissues, ligaments and muscles of the pelvic floor act like a hammock in your pelvis to support the organs and help you to control going to the toilet. During pregnancy these can come under increased strain due to pressure from your growing baby. These muscles can also be damaged or weakened when giving birth.

This can lead to health problems such as accidental leakage of wee or poo (incontinence) or cause the pelvic organs to bulge (prolapse) into the vagina.

If you experience any of the following pelvic floor symptoms during or after pregnancy we advise that you seek help. It's common, and simple treatments will often improve the symptoms and prevent long-term issues:

- Urinary incontinence (leaking wee)
- Overactive bladder (urgency to go to the toilet often)
- Bulge in the vagina, or a heavy dragging sensation (this could be a prolapse, a descent of one or more of the pelvic organs into the vagina)
- Anal incontinence (accidentally pooing yourself or leaking wind)
- Problems with sex, such as having pain or reduced sensation

How to access help

Hospitals in Norfolk and Waveney are providing help and support for anyone with pelvic floor problems or concerns during pregnancy and for 12 months afterwards.

Services will be located at the three Trusts and midwifery hubs in the region that provide maternity services:

- James Paget University Hospital
- Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals
- Queen Elizabeth Hospital Kings Lynn

Our services provide advice and treatments which can help prevent and treat pelvic floor problems.

These services will include directing you to information resources, or invitation to attend either a pelvic floor workshop, or an appointment with a specialist physiotherapist, specialist nurse or a doctor specialising in pelvic health.

After your pregnancy dating scan you will receive the following invitations;

Download the Squeezy App

Evidence shows that starting your pelvic floor exercises early in pregnancy can reduce stress incontinence (leaking urine) in late pregnancy and after birth. Squeezy app can help you to maintain a pelvic floor muscle exercise programme long-term.



ePAQ Pelvic Floor Questionnaire

ePAQ (electronic personal assessment questionnaire) is an online questionnaire which accurately assesses and identifies pelvic floor health problems causing bladder, bowel or vaginal symptoms and sexual concerns.

Filling this in will help the team to identify if you have any problems related to your pelvic floor, and provide you with support and information tailored to meet your needs.

After you have given birth

You may see a member of the physiotherapy team on the ward who will offer advice and exercises to help you recover. They may organise a follow up appointment for you to see a physiotherapy specialist if you are at risk or experiencing symptoms. 4-6 months after giving birth, everyone will be invited to complete a further pelvic floor self-assessment questionnaire to help identify if you have developed any pelvic floor symptoms or concerns which have not resolved.

More information and how to self-refer if you have concerns

Head to the Just One Norfolk website which provides pelvic health advice and information related to pregnancy



and after having a baby. You will find useful exercise videos, bladder and bowel health advice, women's experiences with pelvic health and access to booking on to a webinar to speak to the team for further information.

If you live in the Norfolk and Waveney region you can refer yourself on here if you have any pelvic floor concerns or symptoms during your pregnancy or in the year after birth. From your referral the team will contact the relevant service to support you and provide you with the appropriate care.

Physiotherapy services

For a referral to physiotherapy services please follow the routes below:

James Paget University Hospital

Referral via your GP, Midwife or Consultant.

Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals

Self-referral via 24 hour answer phone on **01603 287 130**. Please leave your name, hospital number, contact number and a brief description of the problem. You will receive a call back to speak about the problem. This service is for women who are planning to have their baby at NNUH, during pregnancy or up to three months after birth.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Kings Lynn

Referral via your GP, Midwife, Consultant or Badgernet.