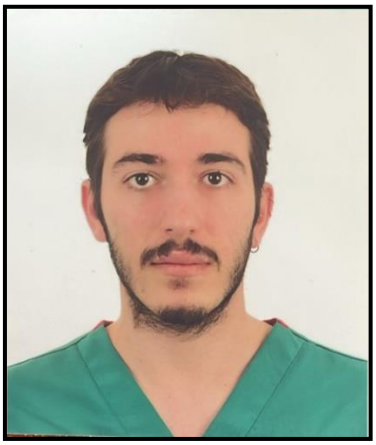
PATIENT EDUCATION FORMS



Turkish translation: Dr. Ege ÖZGÜR

University of Health Sciences, Haydarpaşa Numune Training and Research Hospital, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology

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Urinary Incontinence

Pelvic Floor (Kegel) Exercises

Surgery to Treat Stress Incontinence in Women

Treatments for Urge Incontinence in Women

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Patient Education: Pelvic Floor (Kegel) Exercises (The Basics)

What are pelvic floor exercises? — Pelvic floor exercises are exercises that strengthen the muscles that control urine and bowel movements. These exercises are also called "Kegel" exercises. They can help if you have problems with urinary incontinence, gas, or bowel movements. They can also help with a condition called "pelvic organ prolapse" that affects women. In women with pelvic organ prolapse, the organs in the lower abdomen drop down and can press against or bulge into the vagina.

How can I learn Kegel exercises? — First, ask your doctor or nurse for ways to do them correctly. They can help you get started.
You will need to learn which muscles to tighten. Finding the right muscles can sometimes be difficult.

A woman can learn Kegel exercises by:

- Inserting a finger into her vagina and squeezing the muscles around the finger; or
- Pretending to sit on a marble and thinking about lifting it using her vagina

A man can learn Kegel exercises by tightening the muscles in his buttocks as if holding in gas.

Both men and women can learn Kegel exercises by stopping and starting the flow of urine. If you do this, you may find the right muscles in just one or two tries. Some doctors think you should never do this because if it becomes a habit, it can lead to bladder infections.

However you learn Kegel exercises, the important thing is to know that the muscles involved are not in the abdomen or thighs.

Once you learn to tighten the muscles, you can do the exercises in any position (sitting in a chair or lying down). You do not need to do them while on the toilet.

How often should I do the exercises? — Do the exercises 3 times a day, 3 or 4 days a week. Each time, tighten your muscles 8 to 12 times and hold each squeeze for 6 to 8 seconds. Keep up this routine for at least 3 to 4 months. You will likely notice results, but it may take some time.

How do Kegel exercises help? — Kegel exercises can help in the following ways:

- They can help reduce urine leakage in people with "stress incontinence"; these are people who leak urine when they cough, laugh, sneeze, or strain.
- They can help control the sudden urge to urinate in people with "urge incontinence."
- They can help control gas or bowel movements.
- They can reduce pressure or bulging in the vagina due to pelvic organ prolapse. (If you have a bulge in the vagina, see your doctor or nurse to find out why.)