

### Your Care Instructions

Also known as "pelvic floor" exercises, Kegel exercises strengthen the muscles around the bladder. These muscles control the flow of urine. They can help prevent urine leakage and keep the pelvic organs in place.

A woman who just had a baby might want to try Kegel exercises. They can strengthen pelvic muscles that have been weakened by pregnancy and childbirth. A man or woman may use Kegel exercises to treat urine leakage.

You do Kegel exercises by tightening the muscles you use when you urinate. You will likely need to do these exercises for several weeks to get better.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor or nurse call line if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

### How can you care for yourself at home?

- Do Kegel exercises.
  - Find the muscles you need to strengthen. To do this, tighten the muscles that stop your urine while you are going to the washroom. These are the same muscles you squeeze during Kegel exercises.
  - Squeeze the muscles as hard as you can. Your belly and thighs should not move.
  - Hold the squeeze for 3 seconds. Then relax for 3 seconds.
  - Start with 3 seconds. Then add 1 second each week until you are able to squeeze for 10 seconds.
  - Repeat the exercise 10 to 15 times for each session. Do three or more sessions each day.
- You can check to see if you are using the right muscles. Place a finger in your vagina and squeeze around it. You are doing them right when you feel pressure around your finger. Your doctor may also suggest that you put special weights in your vagina while you do the exercises.
- Do not smoke. It can irritate the bladder. If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor about stop-smoking programs and medicines.

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information, call Health Link at 811.

**Current as of:** December 19, 2018

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