



## **Kegel Muscle Exercises**

Your health care provider has asked you to undergo "Kegel" muscle exercises. The concept of this training period is for you to strengthen the pelvic muscles in the bottom of your pelvis. The bladder does not contain an actual sphincter. Strength training the muscles of the bottom of your pelvis can give an additional sphincter-like effect to your urethra and may possibly be enough to minimize your incontinence or even keep you dry.

You are trying to exercise your entire lower pelvic floor muscle group. Imagine attempting to stop your urinary stream in the middle of urinating or pinching off stool from a bowel movement. These are the same muscles you need to exercise. It is not recommended that you intentionally force urination to stop. This is not good for your kidneys. However once or twice to recognize the muscle group will be OK. You will want to squeeze the muscles and hold them as long as you can until they fatigue. Try "holding" these muscles for 10 seconds. You can monitor your progress in pelvic floor muscle strengthening by placing 2 fingers in your vagina and squeezing.

The exercise is simple. Remembering to do them is difficult. Try to do at least 10 to 20 each day. We recommend you think of reminder "triggers" that can help you remember to practice such as:

stopping at a red light  
after the light turns green  
phone ringing  
clock chiming  
commercial on television  
new chapter in a book  
every time someone says "mom"

If you prefer an alternative approach that is more regimented, try to perform 3 sets of 15 "Kegel" contractions each day. Use whatever method works best for you.

Hopefully, you will begin to notice some improvement in as little as 1 to 2 weeks but it usually takes 3 to 6 weeks to see any benefit and like anything else depends on how hard you work at it. You will then need to continue the exercises daily to maintain your progress just like you would with any other exercise routine.

Your health care provider may ask you to set up a follow up appointment to monitor your progress.