

Common myths about pelvic health

1. "It's normal to leak urine after having babies, as you age and with high intensity physical activity."

It is common, but NOT normal. If you leak when you sneeze/cough/laugh, with certain physical activities, and/or as you're trying to get to the bathroom, it means that your pelvic floor muscles are probably not functioning optimally.

2. "Kegel exercises are THE answer to all pelvic floor problems."

A kegel is a contraction of your pelvic floor muscles. They can improve muscle strength and help when the cause of your symptoms is mainly muscle weakness. However, in many cases the problem is that the pelvic floor muscles are actually too tense, not moving well. Tightness of these muscles can cause symptoms too, in which case doing kegels could make things worse.

Keep in mind: Tightness does not necessarily equal strength. Being able to relax your muscles is as important as being able to contract them.

Even in the cases when kegels are recommended, you need to remember that your pelvic floor is part of an entire system that include other muscles as well, including your abdominal muscles and your main breathing muscle, the diaphragm. Kegel exercises are rarely the one answer for your pelvic floor symptoms.

3. « If I hold my pelvic floor and abdomen tight all the time, I will strengthen these muscles. »

Your pelvic floor and abdominal muscles should engage automatically according to the demand. If they are not, you can train them. As mentioned earlier, tightness does not equal strength.

4. "Painful sex is normal when you start being sexually active, after giving birth and as you age."

It can happen, however it is NOT normal. Sex shouldn't be painful. Tight pelvic floor, hormonal changes, perineal and abdominal scars, and skin problems are some of the reasons why you might experience pain. All of these can be addressed.

5. "If I drink more water I will have to go pee all the time".

Caffeinated and carbonated drinks can irritate the bladder and might make you feel like you need to urinate more often even if the bladder isn't full. Drinking water throughout the day can actually make you pee less frequently by diluting your urine and reducing bladder irritation. Make sure you keep yourself hydrated.

6. "Peeing 'just in case' before I leave the house is a good habit to have."

The bladder is your friend, it can storage a fair amount of urine so you can go through your day without having to plan every bathroom visit. When you constantly go pee "just in case" you might not be allowing your bladder to be completely full and as result you might start feeling like you have to go before you really need to. Pay attention to your habits.

7. "Only women have pelvic floors."

Men and children have a pelvic floor too and can experience pelvic floor dysfunction.

If you are experiencing any of the symptoms mentioned in this document, or maybe something else you think might be related to your pelvic health, talk to a health care professional about it. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Are you thinking about seeing a pelvic physiotherapist but don't know anyone in your area? Let me know and I can help you find someone.

You can contact me at: pelvicpt.quelen@gmail.com