

Pelvic health physiotherapy service

Information for patients

This information leaflet explains more about our pelvic health physiotherapy service. It answers some of the questions you may have about conditions we treat and what to expect from your first appointment.

What is pelvic health physiotherapy?

Pelvic health physiotherapy is a specialist type of physiotherapy which focuses on the pelvic area, including the pelvic floor muscles, and its associated conditions. From incontinence to prolapse, pelvic pain or constipation, there is growing evidence that physiotherapy can alleviate and, in many cases, cure these symptoms. Our pelvic health physiotherapists are experienced in treating individuals through pregnancy, post-natal care, menopause and beyond.

We treat the following conditions:

- pelvic floor muscle tightness vs weakness
- pelvic organ prolapse
- pelvic pain
- bladder and bowel incontinence
- constipation
- urinary frequency and urgency – including overactive bladder syndrome
- pudendal nerve injury
- interstitial cystitis
- vaginal pain including vaginismus and vulvodynia
- perineal, episiotomy and caesarean section scarring

What should I expect at my first appointment?

Your assessment and treatment will be tailored specifically to your symptoms. At your first appointment your physiotherapist will take a detailed history which helps to build an accurate picture of your symptoms and their presentation.

If appropriate, you will be offered an internal examination. This is an important part of the assessment, it helps to examine your pelvic floor muscles, tone, strength and function. It also allows us to identify any scar tissue, pelvic organ prolapse and areas of pain or sensitivity.

An individually tailored treatment and exercise plan will be designed for you to help resolve your symptoms.

In many cases, pelvic health physiotherapy is offered to individuals before medication, surgery or other treatment interventions. If you do not experience improvements with physiotherapy, you will be offered other treatment options by your urogynaecology doctor or nurse following further consultation with them. Physiotherapy is not compulsory, however it is strongly encouraged as first line treatment for many individuals due to the strong evidence-based research support surrounding its beneficial effects.

What will my treatment involve?

The role of physiotherapy treatment is to help you maintain and return to normal pelvic floor function. Treatment may include some of the following:

- pelvic floor muscle strengthening
- core strengthening
- functional exercise programmes to help return to your normal level of physical activity
- diaphragmatic breathing techniques to assist pelvic floor muscle function
- bladder re-training
- bowel re-training (defaecation dynamics)
- fluid, dietary and lifestyle advice
- manual release techniques for muscle tightness and pain
- relaxation and mindfulness techniques for bladder and bowel urgency and pelvic pain
- teaching of trans-anal irrigation

If you wish to change or cancel an appointment that has been made for you, please contact our administration team on 020 3299 8220 or by email on kch-tr.therapyappts@nhs.net

If you do not attend an appointment that has been made for you, we will send a letter to offer a further appointment. You will be required to contact us within 2 weeks of the date of the letter. If we do not hear from you by this time, you will be discharged back to your GP.

Contact details

If you would like to contact us prior to booking or attending your appointment for any further information on what to expect please call 020 3299 2725 or email kch-tr.womensphysio@nhs.net

We look forward to meeting you at your appointment.

The Pelvic Health Physiotherapy Team

Sharing your information

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has partnered with Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust through the King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas' hospitals. King's College Hospital and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trusts share an electronic patient record system, which means information about your health record can be accessed safely and securely by health and care staff at both Trusts. For more information visit www.kch.nhs.uk.

Care provided by students

King's is a teaching hospital where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your physiotherapist if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams. The PALS office is located on the ground floor of the Hambleton Wing, near the main entrance on Bessemer Road - staff will be happy to direct you.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS

Tel: 020 3299 3601

Email: kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Communications and Interpreting telephone line on 020 3299 4826 or email kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net