

Kegel Exercises for Bladder Control

What are Kegel exercises?

- Kegel exercises make your pelvic floor muscles stronger. Pelvic floor muscles help you hold in urine (pee), gas, and stool (poop).
- When these muscles are weak, your bladder may leak urine. This is called **urinary incontinence**.
- Doing Kegels every day can help you have more control of your bladder.

How do I find my pelvic floor muscles?

- Imagine that you are trying to stop yourself from peeing mid-stream or that you are trying to stop yourself from passing gas.
- **Do not** squeeze your belly, thighs, or buttocks (bum). Only squeeze the muscles inside your pelvis.

If you have a penis:

- › You may notice that the base of your penis moves or lifts slightly.

If you have a vagina:

- › You may feel a gentle tightening or lifting feeling inside your vagina.

How do I do Kegels?

It can be easier to do Kegels when you are lying down. Try them lying down at first.

1. Lie down or sit in a comfortable position.
2. Squeeze your pelvic floor muscles. Hold for 3 to 5 seconds.
3. Relax your pelvic floor muscles. Keep them relaxed for 3 to 5 seconds.
4. Repeat 10 times.

How often should I do Kegels?

- Do 3 sets every day. Do 1 set in the morning, 1 in the afternoon, and 1 in the evening. This should only take about 5 to 10 minutes a day.
- You can do Kegels while you:
 - › Watch T.V.
 - › Brush your teeth
 - › Lay in bed

Tips:

- Breathe normally while you do Kegels. **Do not** hold your breath.
- **Do not** do Kegels while you are peeing. This can harm your bladder.
- Be patient. It may take 6 to 12 weeks to see improvements.

Call your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) if:

- › You are not sure you are doing the exercises right.
- › You do not see any improvement after 3 months.
- › You have any pelvic pain.
- › The urine leaks get worse.

If you need more help or information:

- Talk with your primary health care provider.
 - › Ask them about a **pelvic floor physiotherapist** (a health care provider who treats pelvic floor problems).

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:
www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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