Pelvic organ prolapse

Health Resource Directory.org.au

Health Condition Factsheet
Updated November 2026

What is it?

Pelvic organ prolapse (POP) is when one or more pelvic organs come through into the vagina. This happens when there is weakness or damage of the pelvic muscles, nerves and tissues which support the organs. These are the uterus, vagina, bladder, rectum and bowel.

Having a baby is the main cause. On the way through the vagina, the baby can stretch and tear tissue and pelvic floor muscles. Other causes are:

- smoking or asthma
- lifting very heavy weights
- straining to empty your bowels

You may notice a lump coming out of your vagina that you can see or a dragging feeling.You may have trouble going to the toilet or have lower back pain. It can also cause urinary tract infections or pain during sex. Treatment can include a vaginal pessary or surgery.

What will my GP do now?

Your doctor will do a pelvic exam. They may ask you to cough or push down so they can see the extent of the problem. They may suggest treatments such as a vaginal pessary which offers support.
If you have gone through menopause they may give you a hormone cream to make you feel better. Your doctor can also help you manage your weight, treat your cough and reduce constipation to lessen the pressure.

What questions could I ask my doctor?

- ☐ *What exercises can help with this condition?*
- ☐ *What supports do you recommend?*
- ☐ *How might this affect my faily activities?*



What will my GP do in the future?

You should see your doctor for follow-ups when needed. Your doctor may send you to a surgeon for repair of the prolapse. Keep note of any unusual symptoms you experience.

What can I do?

You should get help by seeing a pelvic floor physiotherapist or a nurse continence specialist.
You should be aware some surgeries can cause you other health problems.

What supports are available?

The National Continence Helpline provides free and confidential information, advice and support. They also provide a wide range of resources and referrals to local services. Contact number: **1800 33 00 66**

Where can I learn more?

- **Australia and New Zealand Vulvovaginal Society**– Understanding Thrush: anzvs.org
- **Aus Commission on Safety & Quality in Health Care** – Treatment Options for POP: safetyandquality.gov.au

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

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