

Introduction

Bowel Incontinence

Some people with pelvic floor injuries experience bowel incontinence which results in the inability to control the release of gas or feces. Like those with bladder problems, many people living with bowel or fecal incontinence (FI) never tell anyone, including their doctor. However, there are treatments available that are specifically designed to treat incontinence of gas or feces.

Symptoms

Bowel incontinence occurs when there is a sudden urge to empty the bowels or there is loss of control resulting in leakage of gas or stool (liquid or solid). Fecal urgency occurs when there is a sudden urge to empty the bowels, which can result in not making it to the bathroom in time. Bowel incontinence can be a source of anxiety, embarrassment, and frustration, and frequently results in isolation and avoidance of social situations and community mobility.

Diagnosis

Even though you might feel uncomfortable discussing bowel incontinence with your doctor, it is important to seek medical attention. Your doctor will probably begin by asking you a series of questions concerning when and how often you are unable to control your bowels. After that, your doctor will examine your anus and the area between your anus and genitals to see if there is any physical cause for your problem. It may be helpful to undergo more specialized tests, such as an MRI or CT scan to check your spine, before your doctor can determine a specific reason for the leakage and then recommend a treatment customized for your condition.

Treatment

If your incontinence issues are caused by pelvic floor weakness, spasm or injury, your doctor should recommend physiotherapy. Your first appointment at In Balance Physiotherapy will include an initial assessment and examination, as well as plenty of time for you to ask questions. Our priority is that you feel safe and comfortable at your appointments and we encourage you to bring your spouse, partner or friend with you to your appointments if that would make you feel more comfortable. Your customized treatment program will be based on your physiotherapy evaluation. This may include:

- Pelvic floor exercises
- Biofeedback
- Muscle stimulation
- Bowel retraining
- Relaxation techniques
- Lifestyle changes, including diet, exercise and stress management