

ACCIDENTAL BOWEL LEAKAGE



HEALTH

Non-surgical treatments:

Lifestyle tips

Our physicians and advanced practice providers know a wide variety of tips and tricks women can use at home to prevent accidental bowel leakage and other bowel problems, and these tips are also well-known to our nurses and medical assistants in the clinic. Our physical therapists also serve as experts in these tricks when women want to have a more in-depth conversation about how to prevent bowel leakage using their habits at home. Learn more at: <https://www.voicesforpfd.org/bowel-control/treatments/>

Medicines

Several medicines can help women control their bowels better, both in avoiding constipation and avoiding loose stool. Some of these are simple, like fiber and other supplements that make the gut healthy, but some are prescribed by a doctor. Learn more at: <https://www.voicesforpfd.org/bowel-control/medicines/>

Physical therapy

Our physical therapy team consists of 6 dedicated physical therapists who specialize in not only pelvic muscle strengthening to prevent stool accidents, but balance of the pelvic muscles to relieve stress, strain, and pain from bowel problems. Learn more about physical therapy at: <https://www.voicesforpfd.org/about/physical-therapy/>

Posterior tibial nerve stimulation (PTNS)

This office procedure for bowel control is a small acupuncture needle placed just above your ankle in the office by a specialist nurse, who uses the needle to stimulate nerves in the legs and pelvis gently with a current. This procedure is comfortable and takes about 20 min; it is done weekly in the clinic for 12 weeks and then as needed after that once every 1-3 months. Learn more at: <https://www.voicesforpfd.org/bowel-control/surgery/>

Vaginal devices for bowel control

Our team of expert midwives, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants fit and care for many sizes of soft, flexible bowel control devices that are worn in the vagina and fitted in the clinic without the need for surgery. Learn more about these at: <https://www.voicesforpfd.org/bowel-control/devices/>

Surgical treatments:

Sacral neuromodulation (InterStim® Therapy)

This is offered to patients with bowel leakage that has not improved with other therapies. Sacral neuromodulation is outpatient surgery 1-2 weeks apart, where the first surgery places a small wire in the buttock to stimulate nerves in the tailbone, and the patient wears the wires for 1-2 weeks at home to “test drive” how it works for bowel leakage. The second surgery places a small coin-like battery under the skin of the buttock if the patient likes the improvement with the stimulation. Read more about this at: <https://www.voicesforpfd.org/about/surgery-and-procedures/>

Bowel sphincter repairs

This is for women who have had a large injury to their anal muscles (sphincters) with having a baby or other trauma/injury. Ask your doctor if this choice may improve your stool issues.

Research Studies in Accidental Bowel Leakage:

We are not offering any research studies on bowel habits right now, but stay tuned. In the past, we have offered studies of lifestyle changes, mnemonic devices to help patients remember tricks for bowel control, devices in the vagina for bowel control, and physical therapy for bowel control. The University of New Mexico has been at the forefront of investigating this disorder and intends to do more trials of this pressing problem.