

Non-surgical treatments:

Catheter teaching and tips

Some women with small fistulas from the bladder or urine spaces to the vagina can be managed by wearing a catheter. Our physicians and advanced practice providers know a wide variety of tips and tricks women manage a catheter they are wearing at home and get them a comfortable catheter to wear. Our nurses and medical assistants in the clinic are experienced in teaching patients how to wear and empty their catheters.

Read more about bladder and urine fistulas at:
yourpelvicfloor.org/conditions/genitourinary-fistula/

Read more about bowel or rectal fistulas at:
yourpelvicfloor.org/media/Rectovaginal_Fistula.pdf

Surgical treatments:

Every year, doctors and other providers from our UNM Urogynecology team go to Rwanda with the International Organization for Women and Development to diagnose and treat fistulas in that part of the world. This mission is important to our dedication to helping cure fistulas for women everywhere and also furthers our knowledge and experience in treating fistulas here in New Mexico and the Southwest region. Read more about this fistula work at: <https://iowd.org/what-we-do/>

Surgery repair of fistula through the vagina

Some women with fistulas from the bladder or bowel into the vagina need surgery to fix these, but the surgery can be done most easily through the vagina. Our physicians are experts in fistula repair and have training in fistula repair extensively in this country and internationally, and our team is experienced in preparing patients for these surgeries and caring for them afterward.

Surgery repair of fistula through the abdomen or laparoscopic surgery

Some women with fistulas from the bladder or bowel into the vagina need surgery that involves removal of other organs or moving other organs to steer urine or stool away from the area for a while. Our physicians are experts in fistula repair and have training in fistula repair extensively in this country and internationally, and our team is experienced in preparing patients for these surgeries and caring for them afterward. We typically partner with colleagues in Urology or Colorectal Surgery, also experts in the field, to repair these more complex fistulas, and we are the premier referral center for pelvic fistulas in the state.

Research Studies for Fistulas:

Outreach Studies: We are not currently in any research studies on fistulas, but we are applying for funding to launch a study that would help local and regional hospitals around the Southwest to better diagnose, refer, and help patients with fistulas, so they can get good care promptly. Stay tuned for more details.