

Perinatal Pelvic Health Service (PPHS)

The PPHS is for women (or persons with a cervix) who have symptoms or could be at risk of pelvic floor dysfunction. You must currently be pregnant or within 12 months of having been pregnant.

Our aim is to help identify any pelvic floor dysfunction or risk of this, and subsequently help to prevent, manage or improve symptoms through correction of the dysfunction.

What is pelvic floor dysfunction?

Pelvic floor dysfunction is having difficulty coordinating your pelvic floor muscles. This may present as urinary incontinence (unintentional passing of urine), faecal (bowel) incontinence, vaginal prolapse and/or perineal pain (pain felt between the vagina and anus). Sometimes symptoms are not obvious or they can occur at a later date if not prevented.

How do you treat pelvic floor dysfunction?

Treatment varies for each person and is decided after a detailed assessment is undertaken and a personalised management plan put in place. This may include pelvic floor muscle rehabilitation, lifestyle advice, bladder and bowel advice, bladder retraining, manual therapy, biofeedback, neuromuscular electrical stimulation or scar management.

Evidence has shown it can take 3-4 months to improve pelvic floor dysfunction, so an active and committed participation in your personalised management plan is essential.

What will happen at my first appointment?

Your first appointment will last up to 60 minutes. We will have received lots of information from your referral form, however, we'll still need to ask some additional questions to ensure we provide the most appropriate treatment. This may be followed by a physical assessment including, where appropriate, an internal vaginal examination to enable full assessment of the pelvic floor muscles.

If you are pregnant, we will ask you further questions before we make any decision to perform a vaginal examination. You will have a chance to ask questions and receive more information about what a vaginal examination entails during your appointment, and this will only be carried out with your full consent.

Your appointment will be with a female specialist physiotherapist or a specialist midwife. They are aware of the sensitive nature of the condition and are sympathetic to any concerns you may have about your treatment.

I have my period, should I still come to my appointment?

Yes, please still attend your appointment and if we need to carry out a vaginal examination, this can be done at a later date. If you are only lightly bleeding, and are comfortable to do so, a successful vaginal examination can still be carried out with your consent.

Can I bring someone with me?

Yes, you are welcome to bring a family member or friend with you if this would make you feel more comfortable. If you prefer, you can request a **formal chaperone** (someone trained in being a chaperone) to be in your appointment with you. If you would like to have a formal chaperone, please telephone the PPHS to arrange this, **at least** 48 hours before your appointment date. The telephone number is below, under 'Useful contact details'.

Can I request a translator for my appointment?

Yes, if English is not your first language and you need to have a translator, please let the PPHS know **at least** 48 hours before your appointment.

Can I bring my baby to the appointment?

If you have a baby/young child and unable to find childcare, please do feel free to bring them with you.

Further information

- **Pelvic Obstetric and Gynaecological Physiotherapy (PGOP)**
<https://thepogp.co.uk/resources/booklets/>
- **RCOG Third-and fourth-degree tears**
<https://www.rcog.org.uk/for-the-public/perineal-tears-and-episiotomies-in-childbirth/>

Useful contact details

East and North Hertfordshire Teaching NHS Trust:

- Website www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk
- Telephone 01438 314333

Perinatal Pelvic Health Service (PPHS):

- Telephone 07436 028437 (Monday to Friday, 8 am - 4 pm)
- Clinic address - Hertford County Hospital
North Road
Hertford
Herts SG14 1LP
 - Monday in Clinic D (1st Floor)
 - Friday in Clinic B (Ground Floor)

Leaflet information

You can request this information in a different format or another language;
please speak to your doctor or nurse.

Date of publication: February 2023

Version number: 2

Author: Erica Lewis

Reference: Maternity

Review Date: July 2028

© East and North Hertfordshire Teaching NHS Trust
www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk