

NHS Forth Valley

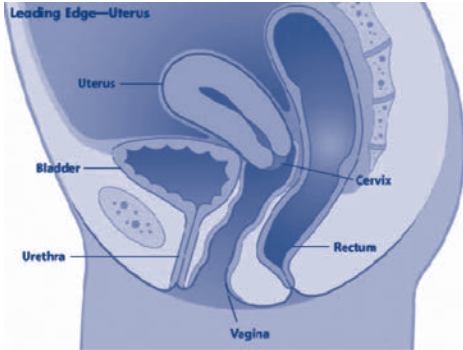
Prolapse

Information for Patients
Physiotherapy Women's Health

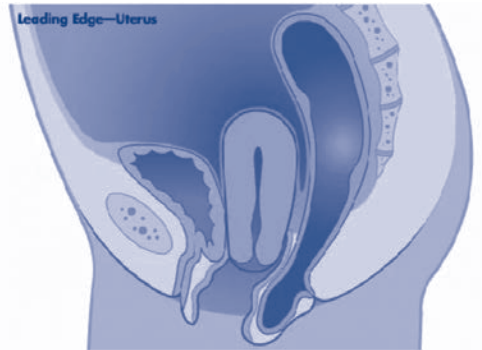
A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of two large, light blue, wavy shapes that resemble a stylized valley or a bridge. The shapes are positioned on either side of a central vertical line, with their ends pointing towards each other at the bottom.

Introduction

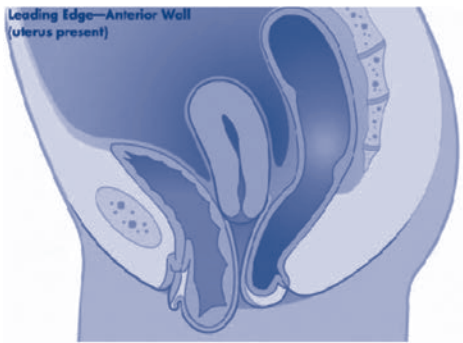
A prolapse is where part of the body has moved from its original position. In gynaecology, the term “prolapse” usually refers to the uterus (womb) starting to come down through the vagina (uterovaginal prolapse). It can also mean the bladder (cystocele) or bowel (rectocele) has moved and is pressing on the vaginal walls.



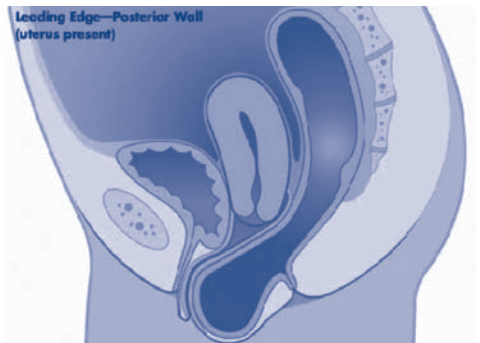
Pelvic Organs



Uterine Prolapse



Cystocele



Rectocele

Causes

Overstretching of the vaginal tissues and underlying supporting structures, usually at childbirth, is the main cause.

Other causes include straining to empty bowels and persistent coughing.

Signs & Symptoms

- A feeling of something coming down.
- A dragging or heavy sensation either vaginally or deep within the pelvis, that worsens as the day progresses.
- A bulging in the vagina (made worse by squatting).
- A protrusion from the vagina.
- Difficulty or pain with intercourse.

How to Help

- Pelvic floor exercises - these help to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles which support the pelvic organs.
- Avoid heavy lifting - this strains the pelvic floor further.
- Weight reduction - extra weight places a greater strain on the already stretched pelvic floor.
- Stop smoking - a smoker's cough will continue to damage the pelvic floor.
- Avoid constipation - this may mean a change in diet or learning the correct way to empty your bowels.

Managing prolapse

It is clear from current research that in the majority of cases, a mild to moderate prolapse can be easily managed by an assessment and input from a specialist physiotherapist.

You will be given general advice as well as very specific pelvic floor exercises. Some women are fitted with a special pessary (a plastic device) that helps support the bulge and in a few cases surgery may be required. In all cases, it is important to have good pelvic floor muscles.

Patient Appointments/Cancellations

If you have an enquiry about an appointment or need to cancel it, please call 01324 566248.

If you can't go let us know!

Every month around 2,000 people across Forth Valley fail to turn up for hospital appointments. This costs the NHS millions of pounds each year and increases waiting times. So if you are unable to attend or no longer require your hospital appointment please let us know so we can offer it to someone else.

We are happy to consider requests for this publication in other languages or formats such as large print. Please call 01324 590886 (24hrs), fax 01324 590867 or email disability.department@nhs.net

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