

# I Can Help!

I use a combination of approaches that offer an effective and efficient way to aid women in returning to their previous level of function.

The Women's Health program at PhysioCare includes a comprehensive musculoskeletal evaluation. Treatment is then individualized for women experiencing difficulties during and after pregnancy, pelvic pain, or urinary incontinence. Treatment can include, but is not limited to, the use of biofeedback to identify pelvic floor musculature, manual techniques to improve pelvic alignment, massage techniques, and education in a home exercise or treatment program.

You are important! I provide a one on one treatment session for 60 minutes which allows me to answer all of you questions, apply necessary treatments specific to your condition, and provide you with helpful materials that empower you to take control of your issue.



**Mary Beth Ackerman, PT**

Mary Beth graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Physical Therapy from the University of Montana with high honors. She has worked in a variety of physical therapy settings, including inpatient care, skilled nursing, urinary/fecal incontinence care, and outpatient neurologic and orthopedic care. She has been specializing in women's health issues, including pregnancy, pelvic pain, and urinary incontinence since 1999. She is certified as a pre/post natal exercise consultant and working toward her certification as a pelvic floor specialist.

# Women's Health



*"Don't Just Live With It"*

Pre/Post Natal Care  
Urinary Incontinence  
Pelvic Pain

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Pelvic Health Specialists

## *Pregnancy Related Back, Neck, Shoulder and Hip Pain*

There are several physical and hormonal changes that occur in your body during pregnancy. All of these can contribute to pain. A few of the changes that occur include:

- Joints become loose and lax
- Increased rounding of the upper back
- Increased arch of the lower back and forward tilt of the pelvis
- Drop in pelvic floor
- Ribs flare up and out
- Muscle imbalances
- Changes in center of gravity

### **Goals of Physical Therapy with Pregnancy:**

- Improve body mechanics and body awareness
- Promote safe and uninterrupted fitness throughout pregnancy
- Education of changes occurring to the body and how to accommodate to those changes
- Decrease risks of further development of current health issues

## *How Does Physical Therapy Help With Pelvic Pain and Urinary Incontinence?*

### *Urinary Incontinence?*

**Pelvic Pain/Vaginismus** is a condition where the pelvic floor muscles either have difficulty relaxing or, due to some trauma, there is scar tissue that has formed and tightened. Many women never report pelvic pain, but typical signs and symptoms include pain with intercourse, painful yearly exams- especially with the insertion of a speculum, inability to insert a tampon, constipation or painful bowel movements.

Physical Therapy specializes in the musculoskeletal system. The pelvic floor happens to be a muscle group that you just can't see. I use techniques to help stretch and relax the pelvic floor muscles. I also teach you relaxation techniques to help relieve much of the pain associated with intercourse.

**Urinary Incontinence** is the involuntary loss of urine. The most common types are either **stress** such as laughing, coughing, exercise or **urgency** that can't be stopped or controlled.

I will teach you to take control of your bladder and not let your bladder control you. Teaching you how to strengthen the pelvic floor in conjunction with dietary changes, timed voiding, and other appropriate education allows you to return to normal activities without the fear of an accident in public or needing to know where every bathroom in the city is located.

## *Treatment Approaches That Make a Difference:*

- Hands on Manual Therapy:
- Muscle Energy Techniques
- Massage
- Myofascial Release
- Scar Tissue Mobilization
- Facilitated Relaxation
- Exercise Geared Specifically to Your Condition:
- Pelvic Floor
- Low Back/Sciatica
- Chest and Mid Back
- Neck
- Feet/Wrists
- Body Mechanics Education:
- Posture
- Daily Activities
- Child Care
- Transitional Movements
- Relaxation Exercises and Stress Management Techniques