

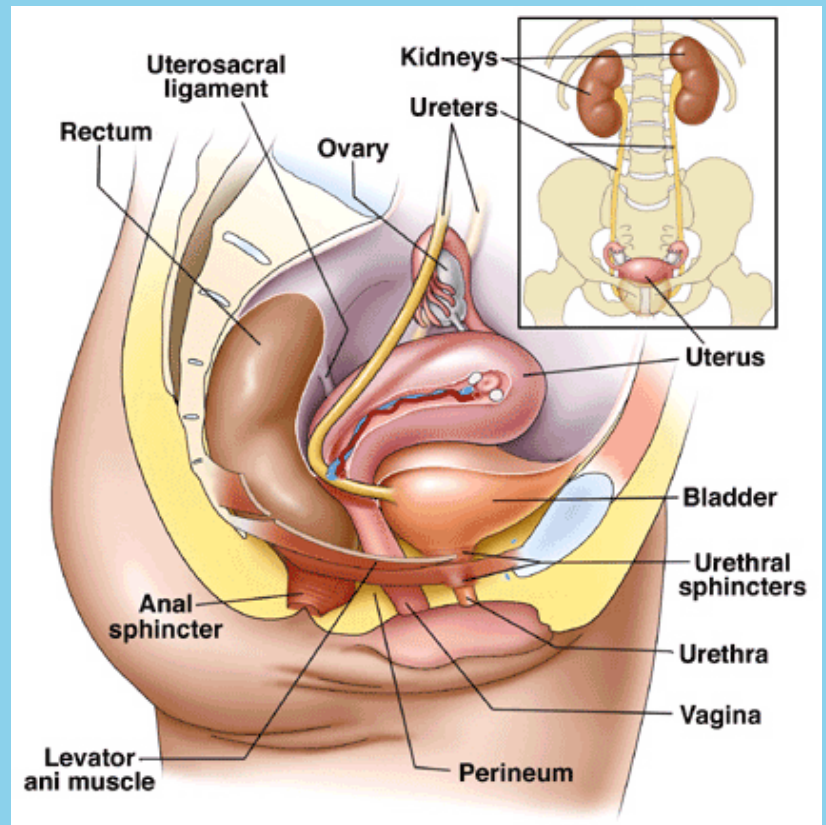
Pelvic Organ Prolapse

Pelvic organ prolapse, or “POP” can best be described as “a woman’s hernia.”

Pelvic organ prolapse occurs when the collagen fibers in the connective tissues holding up the uterus, bladder, rectum, and perineum thin out or stretch. While prolapse is most common in women who have given birth vaginally, it can also happen to women who have never been pregnant or only given birth by Cesarean section.

Pelvic organ prolapse affects 30% of all women and half of women who have borne children. One in nine women will have prolapsed severe enough to warrant reconstructive surgery in the course of her lifetime. Women over age 80 are the fastest growing segment of North American populations, living far more active lives than preceding generations. Our great-grandmothers bore this condition with stoicism and modesty; our mothers and sisters are far more likely to seek help.

Women often live with severe prolapse for years, believing nothing can be done. They blame themselves, “I never did those Kegel exercises.” Or someone else, “My last baby came out so fast right in the bed. That’s why my uterus dropped,” or, “I had an episiotomy.” Many are convinced that the prolapse “Should not be happening to me; I eat right and exercise all the time with my personal trainer; I’m in great shape!” It is none of those things so don’t waste energy on the blame game. Pelvic organ prolapse is just the same as all other wear-and-tear conditions; a little bit of nature and a little bit of nurture.



Types of Pelvic Organ Prolapse

There several specific types of pelvic organ prolapse: uterine Prolapse, vaginal prolapse, dropped bladder (cystocele), rectal bulge (rectocele), deep pelvic hernia (enterocele), and vaginal laxity (perineal thinning).

The walls between the bladder, vagina and rectum sometimes weaken with age and childbirth, causing the bladder to drop, known as a cystocele, or the rectum to bulge, called a rectocele. The connective tissue wedge of the perineum can spread out and thin with childbirth, causing vaginal laxity. And the connective tissue fibers of the uterosacral ligaments can stretch out, letting the uterus prolapse down into, or even out of, the vaginal opening. Many women who suffer from Pelvic Organ Prolapse have some degree of more than one of these conditions.

[Click here to learn more about pelvic organ prolapse](#)