

Pelvic Health Physiotherapy in Postnatal Care – Bladder Health



The Effects of Pregnancy and Labour on the Body: An Overview

- Pregnancy and childbirth (including both vaginal births and Caesarean sections) can have several effects on the body
- The muscles in your pelvis and abdomen may be stretched and weakened following the birth of your baby
- Depending on your birth, you may initially feel uncomfortable in the perineum (area around the vagina and back passage) or abdomen (tummy)
- Hormonal changes in the postnatal period can affect your bladder and bowel habits and your pelvic floor muscles
- You may find that you have to get to the toilet more urgently than usual when you need to wee/empty your bowels
- Some women can experience low back pain or pelvic pain after having their baby

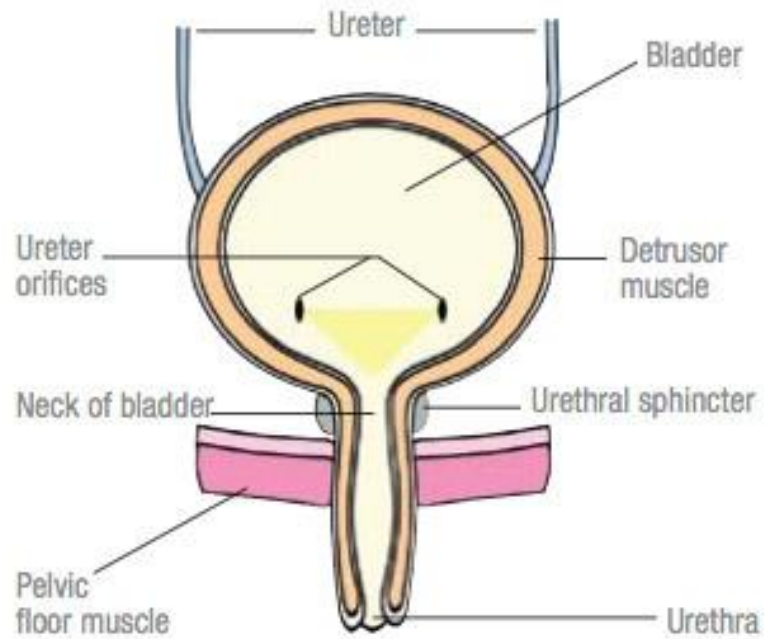
This presentation will provide more detail about the possible effects you may experience during the postnatal period and will offer advice on getting back to your normal daily routine



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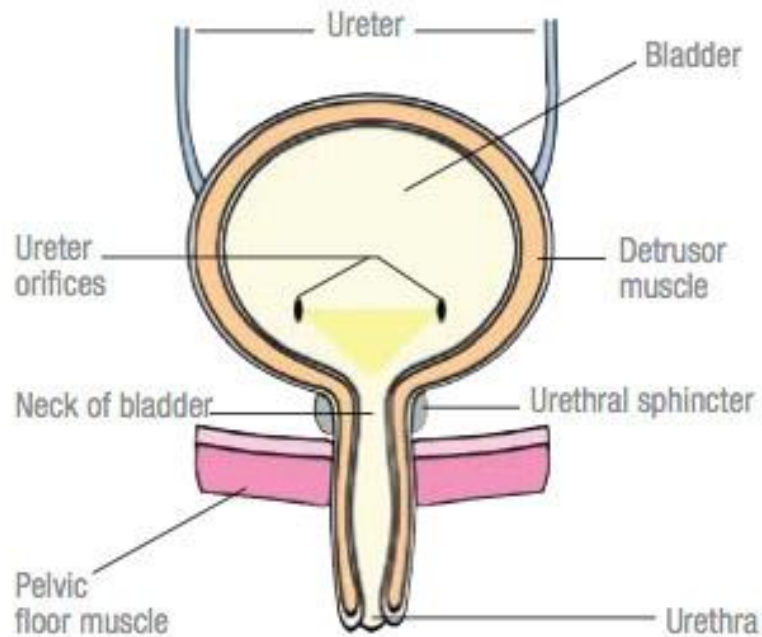
What Does the Bladder Do?



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- The kidneys filter blood to remove excess water and waste, and produce urine, which travels from the kidneys to the bladder
- The bladder stores the urine and then empties it out

What is a Healthy Bladder?



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- Holds between **400 to 600mls** of urine
- Needs emptying up to around **8 times** per day
- And **not more than once** during the night
- Gives **plenty of warning** when it is getting full
- Is **free of infections**
- **Empties fully** without pain or blood in the urine

Tips for a Healthy Bladder



- Drink enough fluids especially if you are breast feeding**
If you are breast feeding you may need more fluid than the usual guidelines recommend (see next page)
- Avoid drinks that may irritate the bladder**
if you get little warning to pass urine
- Strengthen your pelvic floor muscles**
This also helps with bladder control

Drinking for a Healthy Bladder



If you find that you have to rush to the toilet to pass urine

- Drink about 1.5 – 2 litres (6 – 8 mugs) a day (if you are breast feeding you may need more than this)
- Cut out drinks that can irritate the bladder for a few weeks to see if it makes a difference
- Avoid drinking too much alcohol (see [NHS guidance](#))
- **Gradually** swap over from caffeinated to decaffeinated drinks to avoid a caffeine withdrawal headache

For more information regarding urinary incontinence please see
the Women's Health physiotherapy page

[Women's Health - Aneurin Bevan University Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](https://www.nhs.uk)