

# Effective Therapy for Incontinence

## **Biofeedback: A treatment option that truly works!**

Pelvic Floor Muscle Biofeedback is a technique that gives information about muscle function that is usually regulated automatically by the body. A continence care nurse works with you to teach you how to use this information to control the “involuntary” activities. Biofeedback will help you re-condition and strengthen your pelvic floor muscles that are weak and currently incapable of producing a contraction.

## **What type of incontinence can it help?**

- Stress urinary incontinence (SUI)
- Urge urinary incontinence (UII).

## **What is Pelvic Floor Muscle Biofeedback?**

Biofeedback therapy sessions are typically offered in a clinical setting or office on a weekly basis by a clinician who specializes in this type of therapy. Each session lasts approximately one hour, and most patients see results after having 8-10 sessions. Some patients may require more treatments or future visits to tone muscles should they relapse.



Basically, biofeedback therapy uses computer graphs as a visual teaching tool that will help you identify and isolate the correct muscles that need to be strengthened in order to become continent again. For women, a vaginal probe is used as the sensor that picks up the contraction of the pelvic muscles. For men, a small rectal probe does the same. The graphs will change when you squeeze the right muscle. Abdominal leads are also used during the session to help you and your clinician see if you are recruiting the wrong muscles to contract your pelvic floor. The same system is also capable of delivering a painless electrical stimulation to the pelvic muscles, which causes them to contract. This therapy both exercises the muscles and teaches the patient the isolated sensation of pelvic muscle contraction.

Patients who are candidates of pelvic floor biofeedback are normally put on a program outside the realm of weekly biofeedback/electrical stimulation sessions. You will be given “homework” that will include pelvic muscle exercises and a bladder-friendly diet to follow during the course of your therapy. Most patients follow up with their primary care physician with good news after 8-10 weekly sessions.

## **How effective is Pelvic Floor Muscle Biofeedback in treating incontinence?**

Biofeedback can be used to teach correct pelvic floor exercise methods. Because you can see what is happening on a visual level, you are more motivated to work on the muscles and stick with a program. For urge incontinence, biofeedback can also help you understand how to completely relax your bladder so you can reach the toilet before incontinence.

## **You are not a candidate of Pelvic Floor Muscle Biofeedback if:**

- you are pregnant and have a history of miscarriage or have been advised to avoid sex
- your vulva or vagina is inflamed or infected
- you've had pelvic surgery in the last three months
- you have psychosexual problems