

Bladder and Bowel Pain in Children

Bladder and bowel pain in children can present as a persistent ache in the abdomen, or intermittent cramping pain before or after urinating and/or passing a bowel motion. Some children describe spasms of pain within the rectum or vagina which can be very distressing for both the child and caregivers alike. Symptoms of pelvic pain are more common in adolescents, though have been described in children as young as 6 years old.

Common causes of pelvic pain

- Constipation, irritable bowel
- Musculoskeletal triggers, including pelvic floor muscle tension
- Period pain
- Bladder sensitivity following repeated urinary tract infections; may be associated with persisting urinary urgency and frequency
- Diet – including food allergies and intolerances
- Stress/anxiety

How can Pelvic Health Physiotherapy help?

Children presenting with pelvic, bladder or bowel pain should engage with a medical practitioner or specialist for appropriate investigations to exclude infection or systemic causes for their symptoms. Our pelvic health physiotherapists can then assist in managing your child's pain following thorough assessment, working together with other health specialities to provide education, appropriate exercise, practical strategies and support to manage their symptoms. Pelvic floor muscle assessment and exercise biofeedback is provided using real time ultrasound as internal examinations are not performed in children.

For further information on pelvic pain in children and adolescence:

The Pelvic Pain Foundation:

- Children: <https://www.pelvicpain.org.au/a-book-for-children-with-pain/?v=ef10366317f4>
- Teenagers: <https://www.pelvicpain.org.au/category/for-teens/?v=ef10366317f4>

RCH's fact sheet on abdominal pain: https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/Abdominal_pain/

Jean Hailes: <https://www.jeanhailes.org.au/news/pelvic-pain-in-young-women-free-health-article>