

# Kegels: Underused by women to treat and prevent urinary incontinence

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Kegels are underused to treat and prevent urinary incontinence, especially during pregnancy and the postpartum period. This woman-controlled, non-invasive muscle exercise should be taught and the use of Kegels encouraged by providers.

Knowledge and use of Kegels is examined in *Journal of Women's Health*.

"The current study does demonstrate the opportunity for changes in practice that improve Kegel education and performance. Approaches that emphasize the role of providers in preventing, identifying, and treating [urinary incontinence](#) (UI) may improve rates of Kegel exercise, decrease rates of UI, and improve quality of life (physical and emotional) for women," states Susan Yount, Ph.D., Pelvic Floor Disorders Network, and coauthors.

The study examined how women with UI learned about Kegels, and their experience with performing Kegels during pregnancy and up to 6 months postpartum. Only 25% of women with persistent UI postpartum sought care.

"UI risk increases during pregnancy, and Kegels are something a [woman](#) can do on her own to help prevent UI and as a treatment if UI does occur. Providers should educate [pregnant women](#) on the benefits of Kegels and how to perform them correctly," says Journal of Women's Health Editor-in-Chief Susan G. Kornstein, MD, Executive Director of the Virginia Commonwealth University Institute for Women's Health, Richmond, VA.

**More information:** Susan M. Yount et al, Prenatal and Postpartum Experience, Knowledge and Engagement with Kegels: A Longitudinal, Prospective, Multisite Study, *Journal of Women's Health* (2020). [DOI: 10.1089/jwh.2019.8185](https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.2019.8185)

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