Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

# Electrical stimulation for pelvic floor muscles

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# Electrical Stimulation for the Pelvic Floor Muscles

## Patient Information

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## Introduction

Electrical stimulation may be used to help to strengthen weak Pelvic Floor muscles.

## Aims

If your Pelvic Floor muscles are very weak, you may not feel them working when you try to exercise them. Electrical stimulation sends a current through the Pelvic Floor muscles to make them contract which helps to strengthen them.

The electrical stimulation machine helps you to contract your Pelvic Floor muscles until they are strong enough for you to exercise them by yourself.

## Risks

Electrical stimulation should only be used on the advice of a qualified healthcare professional, such as a registered physiotherapist. The physiotherapist will always assess the strength of your pelvic floor muscles prior to its use and make sure that it is appropriate for you.

Your physiotherapist will go through all the contraindications and precautions prior to using electrical stimulation.

If you are suitable for electrical stimulation the only risk may be minor burn/skin irritation and in some instances bleeding. In these instances, the use of electrical stimulation should be stopped immediately. Sometimes symptoms may initially worsen with its use as the Pelvic Floor muscles contract and become fatigued, however, this should settle as the muscles respond and get stronger.

## Benefits

It is a convenient, handheld portable unit that is on loan to you from the hospital. You can use it every day with a probe that you insert either into your vagina or your rectum. The probe is single patient use, and your physiotherapist will give you advice on how to use and clean this.

The intended benefits are for electrical stimulation to start contracting your pelvic floor muscles more effectively so that they can contract against gravity. It may take up to 3 months to achieve this and your physiotherapist may assess you during this time to monitor your progress.

Once this has been achieved the electrical stimulation is stopped and a personalised exercise programme is started.

## Alternative

The alternative treatment option would be to independently exercise your Pelvic Floor exercises without electrical stimulation; however, they may be ineffective if they are very weak, and you can’t feel them working.

Electrical stimulation may not always work. If there is no improvement in Pelvic Floor strength, then the physiotherapist will review you and discuss next steps and/or make an onward referral to another speciality for further input.



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