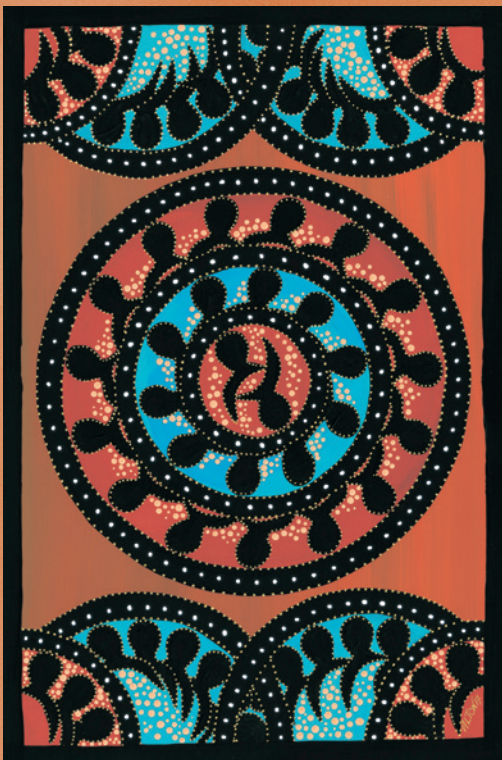




# Leaking urine (wee) after having a baby



Let's yarn about women's business

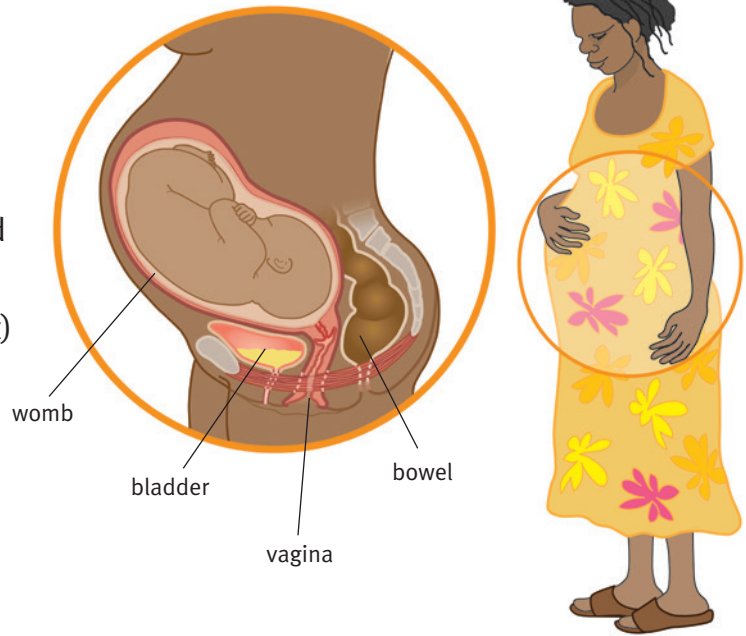


## The pelvic floor muscles

The pelvic floor muscles are important for holding onto your wee and poo. They hold up the bladder, womb and the bowel.

These muscles are between your legs, around your vagina and bottom.

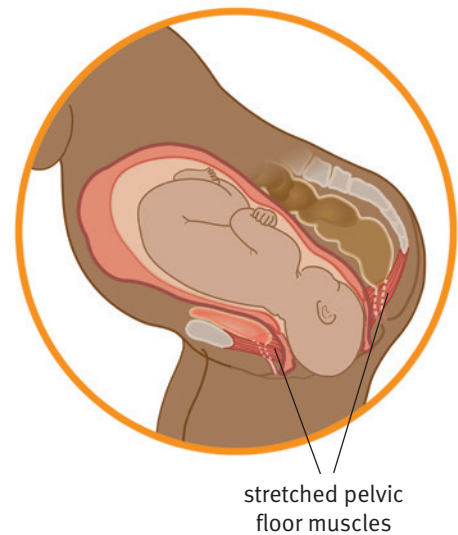
They stretch from the pubic bone (at the front) to the coccyx (tailbone at the back).



## Why some women leak wee after having a baby

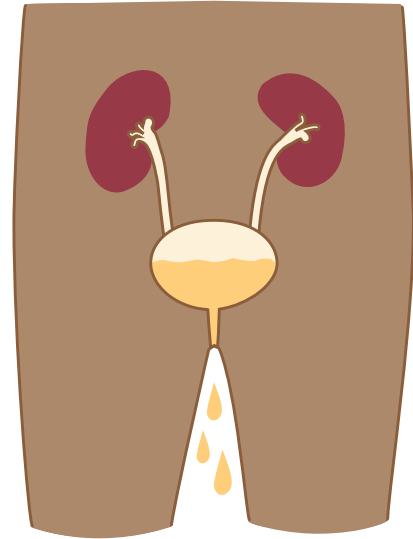
When the baby grows and moves down the vagina when it's born, it stretches the pelvic floor muscles and can make them weak. This stretching means the bladder might leak sometimes.

Leaking will not get better on its own. You need to make your pelvic floor muscles strong again.



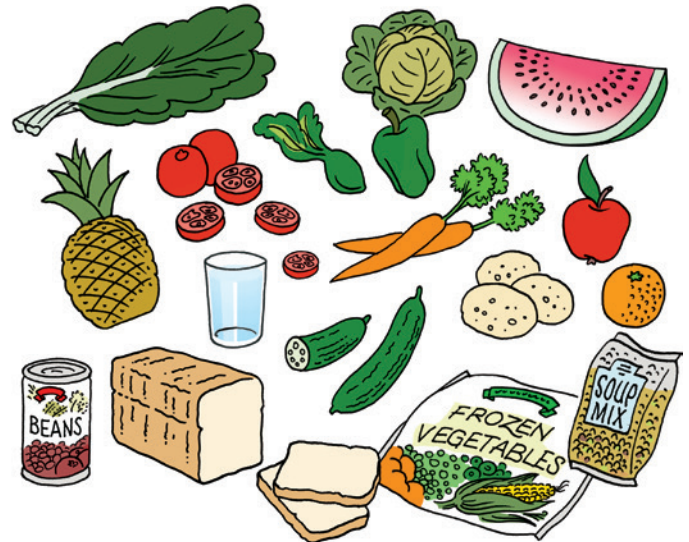
## If your pelvic floor muscles are weak after having a baby, you may:

- leak wee when you cough, sneeze, lift something heavy, laugh or do exercise
- not be able to control wind
- feel a sudden need to wee or poo.



## Healthy bladder and bowel habits

- Make your pelvic floor muscles stronger. Learn how to exercise them and start doing this when you are pregnant.
- Don't push or strain when you do a poo.
- Try to keep a healthy weight.
- Make good choices with food and drinks:
  - eat fruit, vegetables and grains
  - frozen and tinned fruit and vegetables are good too
  - drink fluid every day. Fluid is everything you drink. Fluid includes milk, juice and soup. The best fluid to drink is water.





- Squeeze up and hold your pelvic floor muscles before you sneeze, cough or lift anything heavy.
- When you do a poo sit down on the toilet, lean forward and relax with your stomach muscles pushed out. Breathe slowly and try not to push or strain.



## How to do your pelvic floor muscle exercises

It's important that you work the right muscles. If you are not sure you are exercising the right muscles, talk to your health worker, nurse, physiotherapist or doctor.

Try to do this exercise:

- Tighten the muscles around your bottom and vagina and lift them up inside. This is like holding in a wee or stopping a wee once it has started.
- Try to do both of these front and back muscle pull-ups at the same time.
- Hold on for 8 seconds or as long as you can.
- Try to do these exercises at least 3 times every day.

- You **should** feel:
  - a lifting up from below
  - a squeezing and lifting of the muscles around your vagina and bottom.
- You **should not** feel:
  - your buttocks squeezing together
  - you are holding your breath
  - your stomach muscles moving.

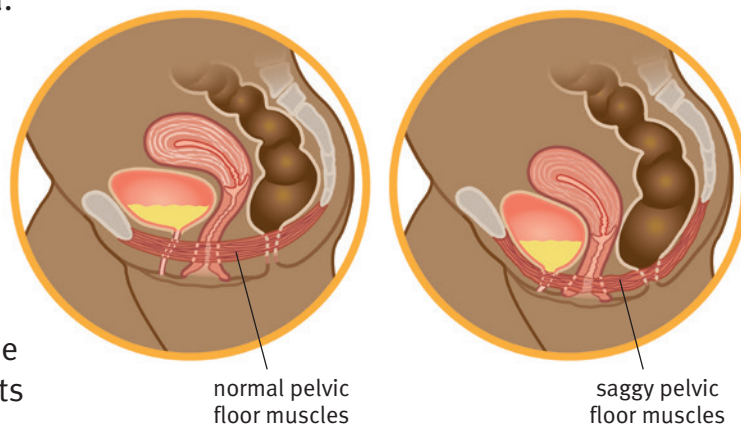
You can do these exercises any time of the day, such as when you are in bed, washing your hands, feeding the baby, in the shower, or when you are sitting and talking with other people.

## Protect your pelvic floor muscles so you don't stretch them

Some things cause sudden pushing and stretching of your pelvic floor, like when you:

- cough
- sneeze
- laugh
- lift heavy things
- hold up your baby
- get out of bed.

Do a pelvic floor muscle exercise at the same time you do any of these things. This protects your muscles from stretching.



## Make the exercises part of your daily life

It takes time to build your strength.

Get into the habit of doing these exercises.

Your health worker, nurse, physiotherapist or doctor can help you.

### It is important to ask your health worker or nurse for help if you:

- rush to get to the toilet to wee or poo
- have burning or stinging if you pass wee
- have to push to make the wee start
- can't hold in wind
- have discharge or smell from your vagina
- have pain doing pelvic floor muscle exercises.

Talk to your health worker, nurse, physiotherapist or doctor



### Who can help?

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health service
- Health workers
- Nurses
- Physiotherapists
- Doctors
- National Continence Helpline **1800 33 00 66**





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