



VAGINAL PROLAPSE

DEFINITION

Vaginal prolapse is the weakening or breaking up of organs such as the uterus, rectum, bladder, urethra, small bowel or the vagina. These organs can fall out of their normal positions as a result of a weakening support system, which is comprised of the muscles, ligaments, and skin in and around the vagina.

VAGINAL PROLAPSE ORIGINS ARE VARIED

- Rectocele – This is a prolapse of the rectum. The back wall of the vagina becomes displaced, causing the rectal wall to push against the vaginal wall. This can result in a bulge.
- Cystocele – This is a displacement of the bladder, also called a bladder drop. This occurs when the front wall of the vagina falls out of place, causing the bladder and possibly the urethra to fall out of place into the vagina.
- Enterocele – This is a prolapse of the herniated small bowel due to the weakening of the upper vaginal supports.
- Prolapsed uterus – This is a prolapse of the womb. It's caused when a group of ligaments on the top of the vagina weaken. This causes the uterus to fall, which is commonly followed by the debilitation of the front and the back walls of the vagina. There are four degrees of uterine prolapse to denote the position the uterus has fallen within or outside of the vagina.
- Vaginal vault prolapse – This is the falling of the top of vagina into the vaginal opening. This can lead to weakened vaginal walls. Ultimately, the top of the vagina may protrude out of the body through the vaginal opening, turning the vagina inside out. A vaginal vault prolapse may be linked to a hysterectomy and often accompanies an Enterocele.

CAUSES OF VAGINAL PROLAPSE

Some common factors of vaginal prolapse can include:

- Childbirth (especially multiple births)
- Menopause
- Hysterectomy
- Age
- Obesity
- Improper functioning of nerves and tissues
- Abnormalities of connective tissue
- Stressful physical activity
- Prior pelvic surgery

GENERAL SYMPTOMS

Some of the more common general symptoms can include the following:

- Vaginal or pelvic pressure
- Pain during intercourse
- Lump at vaginal opening
- Decrease in pain or pressure when lying down
- Recurring urinary tract infections

Symptoms that may be linked to specific types of vaginal prolapse can include:

- Difficulty in emptying bowel or bladder
- Constipation
- Urinary stress (leakage during coughing, sneezing or exercise)
- Pain while standing for long time
- Protrusion of vaginal walls
- Enlarged, widened and gaping vaginal opening

TREATMENT ALTERNATIVES FOR VAGINAL PROLAPSE

Most vaginal prolapse can only be fully corrected with surgery. Here are some common treatment options:

- Non-surgical, for sexually inactive women or women who can't undergo surgery

- Surgical, the most effective of the options, typically recommended for sexually active women
- Self-Care, can include activity modification, a pessary placed in the vagina, and kegel exercises
- Medical treatment, typically consists of estrogen replacement therapy
- Physical therapy, can include electrical stimulation or biofeedback

WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

If you are experiencing one or more of the symptoms listed above, make a note of them and schedule a visit that includes time for a blood test, urinalysis and pelvic exam. In addition, the following tests may be used to evaluate women for vaginal prolapse:

- Q-tip test
- Bladder function test
- Pelvic floor strength
- Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan
- Ultrasound
- Cystourethroscopy

PARTICIPATE IN A CLINICAL RESEARCH STUDY ON VAGINAL PROLAPSE

If you have been diagnosed with Vaginal Prolapse or other gynecological or urological condition, you may want to consider participating in a clinical research study with Precision Trials. Please click here to complete an on-line inquiry form or call:

602-931-4507

Compensation may be available to qualified participants for travel in the Phoenix, AZ area, including but not limited to Gilbert, Chandler, Mesa, Scottsdale, Glendale, Paradise Valley, Peoria, and Sun City.

Participation is voluntary.