

# *Read All About It:* PELVIC ORGAN PROLAPSE



Under normal conditions in women, the bladder is held in place by a “hammock” of pelvic muscles and tissue. When these tissues are stretched and/or become weak, the bladder and/or rectum can drop and bulge through this layer and into the vagina. This results in Pelvic Organ Prolapse (POP). In severe cases, the prolapsed bladder can appear at or even through the opening of the vagina.



POP affects almost  
**25%**  
of U.S. women



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## COMMON CAUSES INCLUDE:

- Vaginal childbirth, which can stretch and strain the pelvic floor muscles
- Long-term pressure on your abdomen from obesity, chronic coughing or straining during bowel movements
- Aging
- Hormonal changes during menopause
- Family history of POP



## POP SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

- Seeing or feeling something coming out of the vagina
- A feeling of pressure, discomfort, aching or fullness in the pelvis
- Pelvic pressure that gets worse with standing or coughing, that may increase in severity as the day goes on
- Leaking urine or problems having a bowel movement
- Problems inserting tampons

## TREATMENT OPTIONS INCLUDE:

- Pessary - a removable device inserted into the vagina to support the pelvic organs
- Pelvic floor muscle therapy to help strengthen the pelvic floor muscles
- Eating more fiber to prevent constipation and straining during bowel movements
- Surgery to restore support of the pelvic floor

## TO PREVENT POP:

- Maintain a healthy weight or lose weight if needed
- Eat more fiber
- Stop smoking - smoking can lead to a chronic cough, which can put stress on the pelvic floor muscles

