

**What Every Woman Should Know...**  
**Incontinence, Pelvic Pain & Back Pain can be successfully treated**  
**Without drugs or surgery**

**An Interview With: Stephanie Pritts, PT,  
Director of Women's Health, Rehab Professionals of Cleveland, Inc.**

Rehab Professionals of Cleveland has a Women's Health component - a physical therapy program for conditions unique to women such as pregnancy- related pain, incontinence, frequency, urge, pelvic pain, painful scarring, vulvar pain, fibromyalgia and osteoporosis. Stephanie Pritts, PT, Director of Women's Health for Rehab Professionals and Jennifer Blakeney, PT, MPH can help you unlock the "Secrets " to return to a normal lifestyle. Stephanie shared what Women's Health Therapy is all about:

**What are *Women's Health Secrets*?**

*Women's Health Secrets* are the very sensitive health issues that many women don't seek help for. These "secrets" are the facts every woman should know about their own bodies. There are few professionals who treat these conditions effectively. Many physicians recommend medication or surgery because they are unaware that physical therapy can decrease or eliminate symptoms when provided by a specially trained physical therapist.

The first group of Women's Health Secrets is related to bladder function. ***Women do not have to accept urine leakage, also known as incontinence, as a normal part of aging or a consequence of childbirth.*** *Urgency* is a desperate feeling of needing to use the bathroom immediately. *Frequency* is the need to urinate more and more often. *Stress* incontinence is losing urine during a cough, sneeze, or laugh. I have worked with women who used the bathroom almost every 30 minutes. This is not something women have to live with!

**How does a physical therapist address Women's Health issues?**

A Women's Health specialist is a licensed physical therapist who has devoted time and study to the health issues uniquely associated to women's anatomy and bodily changes associated with pregnancy, post partum, menopause, and normal aging.

I have more than 25 years of physical therapy experience, including over 15 years devoted to women's health issues. I am a member of the Women's Health Section of the American Physical Therapy Association.

**Over the past 10 years, we have seen an explosion in absorbent products, such as Depends, etc. Are you saying women do not need to use these?**

Women have a choice! My experience in working with women who have incontinence is that, after *physical therapy* most women no longer need to use these absorbent products or only need a small pad to be changed infrequently.

Downward pressure of the bladder and other organs that rest in the pelvis is another problem women feel they have to live with. Downward pressure can be significantly reduced or eliminated with proper interventions and exercises. One woman that I have worked with for downward pressure came in for her visit and told me "I went to see my doctor. He said the position of my uterus is improved and he's never seen this before."

**Can physical therapy help women of all ages?**

Women's health specialists treat obstetric patients with pain related to pregnancy and childbirth. We treat fibromyalgia which is a syndrome causing muscle pain and fatigue. We can also help women with lymph edema and other mastectomy related problems. Physical therapy can be used to conservatively treat incontinence (frequency and/or urgency), constipation, prolapse, pelvic pain, low back and tailbone pain, prenatal and post partum issues, pain on intercourse, vulva pain, or other pelvic basin pain. All of these can be successfully treated by *physical therapy* interventions.

### **What do you do for these women?**

Physical Therapists do a combination of things including manual therapies, specialized exercises, education, self-management techniques, and the use of physical therapy modalities. Rehab Professionals of Cleveland, incorporates a number of traditional physical therapy treatment techniques such as core strengthening, myofascial release, EMG biofeedback, self care instructions, and home exercises. The foundation of Rehab Professionals' approach to treating the Women's Health population is using the Beyond Kegels Protocol established by Janet Hulme, MS, PT. **Our results are excellent, closes to 100% of women get better and more than half completely eliminates their symptoms.**

### **If someone is interested in the physical therapy interventions appose to medication or surgery what do they do next?**

Knowledge is power, "I highly recommend women educate themselves through the Internet, our web page is [www.rehabpros.net](http://www.rehabpros.net)". Direct Access is now an option in which you can be seen by a physical therapist without a prescription and most insurance companies will cover it. Physical Therapy is covered by nearly all insurance companies and Rehab Professionals of Cleveland accepts most plans. Another option is to see your doctor and get a prescription for a physical therapist.

Rehab Professionals of Cleveland, Inc.; believes that women today face an increasing number of issues that require special care. Because physical therapy is non-invasive, it should be recommended before surgery. Often fewer than six physical therapy sessions can result in significantly diminished symptoms. Patients can see Stephanie Pritts, PT at our Lakewood office or one of our other women's health specialists in Broadview Heights or Downtown Cleveland. Contact Rehab Professional of Cleveland, Inc. 216-221-2525 or 440-526-8566 for more information.