

Royal Manchester Children's Hospital

Information for Patients

Biofeedback

Biofeedback is a non-surgical technique used to retrain the pelvic floor muscles. Regular exercise of these muscles helps to improve their strength and, by teaching contraction and relaxation of these muscles, improved bladder control may be achieved.

Biofeedback is not a "quick fix" or guaranteed to improve bladder control, but with lots of dedication, it can make a big difference for some children and young people and prevent more invasive interventions.

Where does biofeedback therapy take place?

Biofeedback Therapy Sessions take place at **Trafford General Hospital** within the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital Satellite Unit also known as the Children's Resource Centre. Please use Entrance 5 and you will find the Unit on your left. The Unit is within the Green Zone of the Hospital.

How is biofeedback performed?

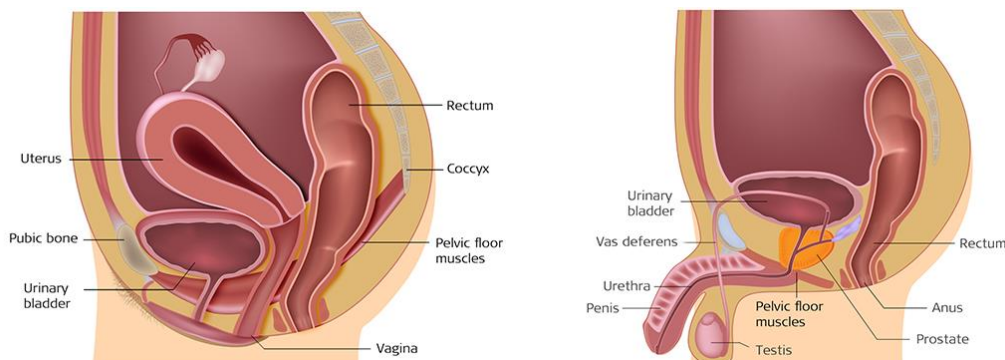
A programme of several biofeedback sessions over a number of days is performed; the programme is different for each child depending on their condition. Each session lasts approximately 1 hour and exercises must be continued at home if progress is to be achieved and maintained. The continuation of these exercises at home and this practice becoming part of the daily routine is essential for the treatment to be a success. To assist with this the Nurse will give 'homework' which must be completed.

Two electrodes (soft stickers) are placed on either side of the bottom (just inside the buttock), and one electrode on each hip bone. The electrodes are connected to a computer and, using animated games, your child is shown how to isolate and exercise the correct muscles.

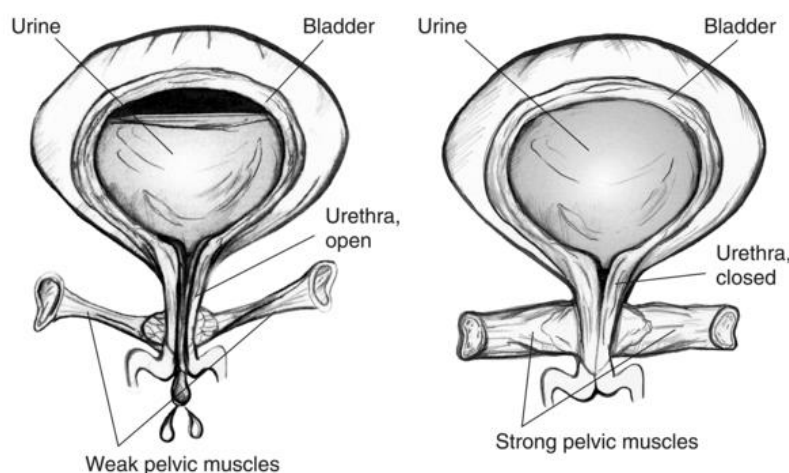
What is the pelvic floor and where is it?

The pelvic floor is made up of layers of muscles which extend from the tail bone (coccyx) at the back to the pubic bone to the front of the pubic bone. It forms a 'platform' between the legs and provides the floor to the pelvis (the bottom part of your abdomen/tummy) and supports the bladder and bowel. It helps to control the:

- **Urethra** – the tube that takes urine outside of the body
- **Anus** (back passage) – where stool passes through when the bowels are opened



When we strengthen the pelvic floor through regular daily exercises, it can help stop urine leaking out in between going to the toilet. We can also do exercises which teach children and young people how to relax their pelvic floor, so that when they go to the toilet, they are able to empty their bladder more effectively.



What other tests might my child need?

Bladder Assessment

Many patients attending for biofeedback sessions will also require bladder assessment. This may be carried out at the same time as the biofeedback sessions. This involves asking detailed questions about bladder and bowel habits and control.

Uroflowmetry (or Uroflow)

As part of the bladder assessment your child may be asked to pass urine into a special toilet which measures the amount of urine passed and provides detailed information about the flow and speed of the urine.

Bladder scanning

To complete the bladder assessment, a small quick ultrasound scan may be performed immediately before and after your child has been to the toilet. This provides information regarding how effective the bladder is at holding and emptying urine.

How can my child practice pelvic floor exercises at home?

As with all muscles, regular exercises make them stronger. Regular pelvic floor exercises can strengthen the pelvic floor muscles and improve bladder emptying, reducing the risk of urinary tract infection and improve bladder control, helping to improve continence and reduce wetting incidents. Pelvic floor exercises can be done anywhere and at any time and can be performed whilst standing up or sitting/lying down. When performing the exercises, it is important that your child does not hold his/her breath.

Your child needs to know which muscles to use so that you can be sure your child is exercising the right muscles at home. Biofeedback sessions will teach your child which muscles to use. They should practice at home by imagining trying to avoid passing wind by squeezing inside the bottom and pulling upwards whilst keeping the tummy relaxed. You can help to make sure your child is doing this correctly by placing one hand on your child's tummy and one on their bottom. You will be able to feel when your child tightens their muscles and tell if they are keeping their tummy relaxed. Your child should start by tightening the muscles and count to five then relax the muscles and count to five. Gradually increase the number you count up to as this will gradually strengthen the muscles.

The nurse may provide you with further information leaflets for exercises you can practice at home, following your first appointment.

How often should pelvic floor exercises be performed?

Pelvic floor exercises should become part of everyday life and be practiced for five to ten minutes at least twice a day (if possible more frequently) however do not expect instant results! It will take several weeks of regular exercise for your child to gain strength in the pelvic floor muscles so like all athletes your child must keep practicing!

Handheld biofeedback machines

We understand that it can be challenging to encourage your child to do pelvic floor exercises at home, and that it's hard to know whether they are contracting and relaxing the muscle correctly without the biofeedback machine attached.

Using money donated to Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, we have been able to purchase some handheld biofeedback machines to loan out to families to help them practice exercises at home. Each child who comes for biofeedback sessions with our nurses will be assessed for their suitability for a handheld biofeedback machine.

If you are eligible, the machine will be loaned to you for a period of 8 weeks to help you and your child practice doing pelvic floor exercises at home. You will need to purchase your own electrodes to use with the machine, information for this will be provided by the nursing staff. After you have had the machine for 8 weeks, you will need to return the machine to the nursing staff (in full working order), and you can either continue exercises without the machine at home or purchase a machine yourselves. The handheld machine can also be loaned directly from the manufacturer.



In case of problems or advice please call:

General queries (Urology Secretaries)

(0161) 701 1635

Children's Resource Centre, Trafford General Hospital
(Monday-Thursday 07:00-16:00)

(0161) 746 2366

