Pelvic Health Matters

Bladder and Bowel Issues That Affect Sexuality

Wednesday May 4, 2016
Welcome Panelists

- Leanne Beers PhD(c), Missoula, MT
- Meena Outlaw, Author, Sugarland, TX
- Liza Criswell, OTR, ATP, Houston, TX
Sex needs to be addressed because:

• Having sex after disability may mean adjusting, inventing, accommodating, discovering, innovating;

• People need to know relationships and relations are still possible;

• People need not give up on their dreams of love, marriage, parenthood, typical lives.
What is the pelvic floor and how will it help with bowel and bladder control?

The pelvic floor is a sling of muscles that support your abdominal contents at the bottom. The job of the pelvic floor is to “lift” and stabilize your abdominal contents INCLUDING the bladder and the colon/rectum. See in the picture below how the muscle is a hammock-like muscle.
As shown below the bladder, uterus, and rectum all go through this group of muscles, so when it is contracted and lifts, it closes the bladder and rectum, which helps maintain continence. The stronger your pelvic floor, the more control you have over your bowel and bladder function!
Helpful tips about positions for intimacy and bowel/bladder control.

• When you sit, your abdominal contents rest on your pelvic floor.

• What this means is that you have more stuff pushing on your bladder and rectum. It’s harder to control your bladder and bowel with this pressure, so the IDEAL position would be lying down with your hips raised slightly. (see below)
The IDEAL Position

- This illustrates the proper positioning of the pillow. You can have your legs straight, turned out to the side, or bent.
- This is the ideal position, but not always convenient or doable.
Here are some other things to think about and recommendations.

• Lying on your side will also help the abdominal contents move off of your pelvic floor.

• Does your chair tilt? If yes, it’s a good idea to tilt back slightly as this will help with pressure on your pelvic floor.

• Do you have spasticity? If so, work with pillows to support your legs, arms, body so that you aren’t fighting your spasticity. This will lead to fatigue and exacerbate the spasticity.
Introductions

• Meena Outlaw
• Liza Criswell
Meena:

What does the bladder do as the pregnancy progresses?
Liza:

Is it safe to wear tampon again after SCI? How can I manage it?
Meena:

How does being pregnant change your mobility and what can you do to help that?
Question

Liza:

Are there state and/or national advocacy groups for these medical/women's accessibility issues? If so, how do I get more involved?
Question

Meena:

Do spasms become frequent around the bladder and bowels during pregnancy?
Liza:

Can you please explain how one could prepare themselves for intimacy so not to have a bowel or bladder accident.
Thank You!
And Remember...
Your Pelvic Health Matters!!
Other Questions?

• Please type your questions into the chat box or send an email to crowd@BCM.edu
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  – Wednesday, May 18, "Access to Quality Pelvic Health Care for Women with Mobility Impairments"
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