

## **GUIDELINES FOR PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISES (KEGEL EXERCISES)**

### **I. What are pelvic floor exercises?**

- A. A learned technique of relaxing and contracting your perivaginal muscles. These exercises are designed to strengthen and give you voluntary control of the muscle that encircles the urinary opening.

### **II. How to identify the correct muscles: (Here are 2 suggested techniques).**

- A. Place a finger in the vagina. Squeeze around the finger.
- B. These are the same muscles you use to stop your stream of urine.

### **THESE ARE THE MUSCLES THAT SHOULD BE EXERCISED!!!**

- C. It is very easy to use the incorrect muscles. The muscles most frequently incorrectly used are your abdominals. Place a hand on the lower abdomen. If you feel a tightening, you are using the abdominals. To decrease this muscle contraction, take slow, deep breaths, and re-identify the correct muscles (A&B).

### **III. Performing the exercises:**

- A. Each exercise should consist of a 1 to 10-second period of contraction and then relaxation of equal duration. Do not be discouraged that you are unable to hold your contraction for 10 seconds. This will improve with time, relaxation phase is just as important as the contraction phase.
- B. 15 repetitions (contraction and relaxation is one repetition) should be done 3 times per day. One set (15 repetitions) should be done while standing, another while sitting, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> lying down.
- C. Pelvic floor exercises can be performed any time, any place. When the exercise is performed correctly, no observer should be able to detect that one is practicing pelvic floor exercises.

### **IV. When to use pelvic floor exercises:**

- A. If you are incontinent when you laugh or perform strenuous activities, contract your muscles as you are coughing, jumping, swinging the golf club, etc.
- B. If you are incontinent when you get the urge to urinate:
  - 1. Do not run to the bathroom.
  - 2. Stop. Contract your pelvic floor muscles. Take a couple of deep breaths. Walk at a normal pace to the bathroom.

## **AT URGE TO VOID DO 10 QUICK CONTRACTIONS**