



# Pelvic Floor Therapy Improves Bladder Control

By Abbey Cappadonna

When conventional treatments for urinary incontinence fail or when patients want to avoid such treatments, doctors may recommend a regimen of pelvic floor therapy or biofeedback therapy. This type of treatment can also be used in conjunction with more traditional therapies and can result in significant relief of symptoms in many cases.

In 2003, Urology San Antonio opened its own behavioral treatment and biofeedback clinic known as the Center for Urinary Control. Under the direction of nurse practitioner Peggy P. Francis, the Center has helped thousands women and men improve their bladder control.

“Biofeedback is a specialized type of training that teaches people to regain control over what are ordinarily unconscious body functions,” Francis explains.

“It’s not a passive treatment, and it certainly requires a patient’s commitment to attend the sessions and learn the techniques. But most say the rewards are worth it.”

At the Urology San Antonio Center for Urinary Control, pelvic floor therapy patients typically participate in treatment sessions with Francis, a trained biofeedback specialist, once a week for six to eight weeks.

During the sessions, the patients learn to visualize and contract the pelvic floor muscle in order to strengthen it and reduce incontinence events.

“It sounds easy to do, but most patients who think they are exercising their pelvic floor muscle are actually contracting other muscles,” Francis says. “Showing them their body’s reaction on a computer screen helps them isolate the muscle and perform the exercises correctly.”

Patients who have difficulty isolating the pelvic floor muscle may require transvaginal low frequency electrical stimulation to contract the muscle and “show” them what to do.

Once a patient is able to isolate and contract her pelvic floor muscle satisfactorily, Francis assesses the muscle’s strength and makes recommendations for specific behavioral modification techniques, including time voiding and urge suppressions.

She says that many patients who complete an average of six once a week sessions are able to gain control over their voiding status without medications.

*For more information on behavioral therapy and the Urology San Antonio Center for Urinary Control, call (210) 614-4544.*