

What Is a Rectocele?

A rectocele is a bulging of the front wall of the rectum into the back wall of the vagina.

How do I know if I have Rectocele?

Most people with a small rectocele do not have symptoms. Rectocele is often found during routine physical exams. When a patient has a large rectocele a bulge (large lump) can be felt inside the vagina.

- Trouble having bowel movements.
 - The need to press against the vagina and/or space between the rectum and the vagina to have a bowel movement.
 - Straining with bowel movements.
 - Constipation.
 - The urge to have many bowel movements throughout the day.
 - Rectal pain.
 - Pain with sexual intercourse.
 - A sense of fullness in the vagina.
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What causes Rectocele?

Rectoceles are often caused by thinning of the rectovaginal septum (tissue between the rectum and vagina). It can also be caused by weakening of the pelvic floor muscles. There are many things that can lead to weakening of the pelvic floor, which may include:

- Vaginal deliveries during childbirth.
- Damage during a vaginal delivery.
- History of constipation (trouble with bowel movements).
- History of straining (pushing too much) with bowel movements.
- History of gynecology (hysterectomy) or rectal surgeries.

How can I fix it?

- High fiber diet to avoid constipation and straining with bowel movements.
 - Pelvic floor exercises such as Kegel exercises.
 - Stool softeners.
 - Application of pressure to the back of the vagina during bowel movements.
 - Surgery.
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When is surgery needed?

Surgery should only be thought about when symptoms do not go away with treatments and if the symptoms affect your life.

The type of surgery depends on the size of the rectocele and its symptoms. Most surgeries remove the extra tissue that makes up the rectocele, use mesh (patch) or tissue around the vagina. This will strengthen the wall between the rectum and vagina.

How can I learn more?

You can also find information through the American Society of Colon & Rectal Surgeons (ASCRS) at <http://www.fascrs.org/patients/conditions/>

Do you have any questions or comments for your doctor?
