Pelvic Floor Muscle Biofeedback

Biofeedback, or surface electromyography (SEMG), is a technique where a normally unconscious physiological process (bladder and bowel control) is presented to the patient and therapist as a visual signal in order to gain greater awareness and ultimately improve control of those functions. SEMG is non-invasive, painless and easy to perform. It is an effective technique in improving bladder and bowel control and/or decreasing pain and holding patterns.

SEMG biofeedback is used for the assessment and treatment of pelvic floor muscle dysfunction by a pelvic floor physical therapist. It allows the therapist to monitor the performance of Kegel exercises in order to assess pelvic floor muscle resting tone, coordination, and endurance. After evaluating pelvic floor muscle function using biofeedback, the therapist is better able to provide a specific exercise prescription for the patient to address her or his individual needs.

Biofeedback can help to improve awareness and control of the pelvic floor muscles. It also can provide motivation to the patient in his or her ability to perform a kegel through visual feedback.

Conditions that can be assessed and treated using biofeedback include: stress incontinence, urge incontinence, mixed incontinence, overactive bladder, fecal incontinence, constipation, and pain. The specific diagnosis will help determine what type of training the patient will need: up training, down training, coordination training.

What to expect during biofeedback therapy session: the therapist will place two sensory electrodes externally or internally in order to pick up the pelvic floor muscle readings on a computer screen. The patient is properly draped with a sheet and is fully covered during the therapy session. The patient will be able to see his or her pelvic floor muscle activity on the computer to provide visual feedback to help improve pelvic floor muscle function and improve symptoms.