TOILETING POSTURE AND TECHNIQUES

FOOTSTOOLS

Due to the alignment of our pelvic floor muscles in different positions, the ideal position for urination and defecation is a squat posture in which the muscles are on slack. In standing and sitting, the pelvic floor muscles are on tension which creates a “kink in the hose” of both the rectum and the urethra. It is one way the body tries to prevent loss of body fluids in standing and sitting. However, as most of us are in an upright sitting posture on the toilet, we do not empty as well as we would in a squat position.

Enter, the footstool! By placing your feet on a footstool when sitting on the toilet, you can assume a squat position while seated.

Some key notes:

- Knees should be higher than the hips to ensure relaxation of the pelvic floor muscles.
- You should be able to rest your elbows on your knees comfortably without rounding the back.
- Footstools can vary in height. 7 inches is usually appropriate for a standard height toilet stool. If you, or your toilet, are taller, you may need a taller footstool (up to 9 inches).
- You can find the “Squatty Potty” or similar footstools made specifically for the toilet on Amazon or other online retailers.

EMPTYING TECHNIQUES

In addition to proper positioning, there are techniques to assist with emptying both the bowels and bladder. The goal is to avoid straining which puts pressure on the pelvic floor muscles and organs. This is particularly important for those experiencing constipation, prolapse of organs, or urine retention.

Techniques include:

- Exhaling several times through pursed lips like you are blowing out a candle. This activates the deep abdominal muscles which stimulate the colon and bladder motility. This can be done to both initiate bowel movements and urine stream and to help empty after the initial flow.
- If you have an organ prolapse that is inhibiting how well you empty your bowels, you can place toilet paper on your hand and gently lift up the tissue just in front of the anus to support the prolapse. This will help re-position the prolapse so that the bowels can empty. This is done just for bowel movements.

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