

## PUDENDAL NEURALGIA AND OSTEOPATHY

The muscles and joints of your musculoskeletal system can become painful and dysfunctional when you have been living with pelvic and perineal pain. They may be the primary cause of pain or involved secondarily through normal adaptations to your pain. The Osteopathic approach to Pudendal Neuralgia involves the safe and gentle treatment of specific muscles, joints and connective tissues of your pelvis, spine and throughout your body. We utilize the latest research for you to manage your pain at home via pudendal nerve glides, simple stretches and an understanding of why you hurt.

### WHY HAS OSTEOPATHY BEEN RECOMMENDED FOR ME?

You may have been referred for Osteopathic treatment from one of our clinicians at WHRIA, who has identified musculoskeletal issues from your history and physical examination. Factors that can contribute to pudendal nerve irritation and/or your overall pain experience include a history of:

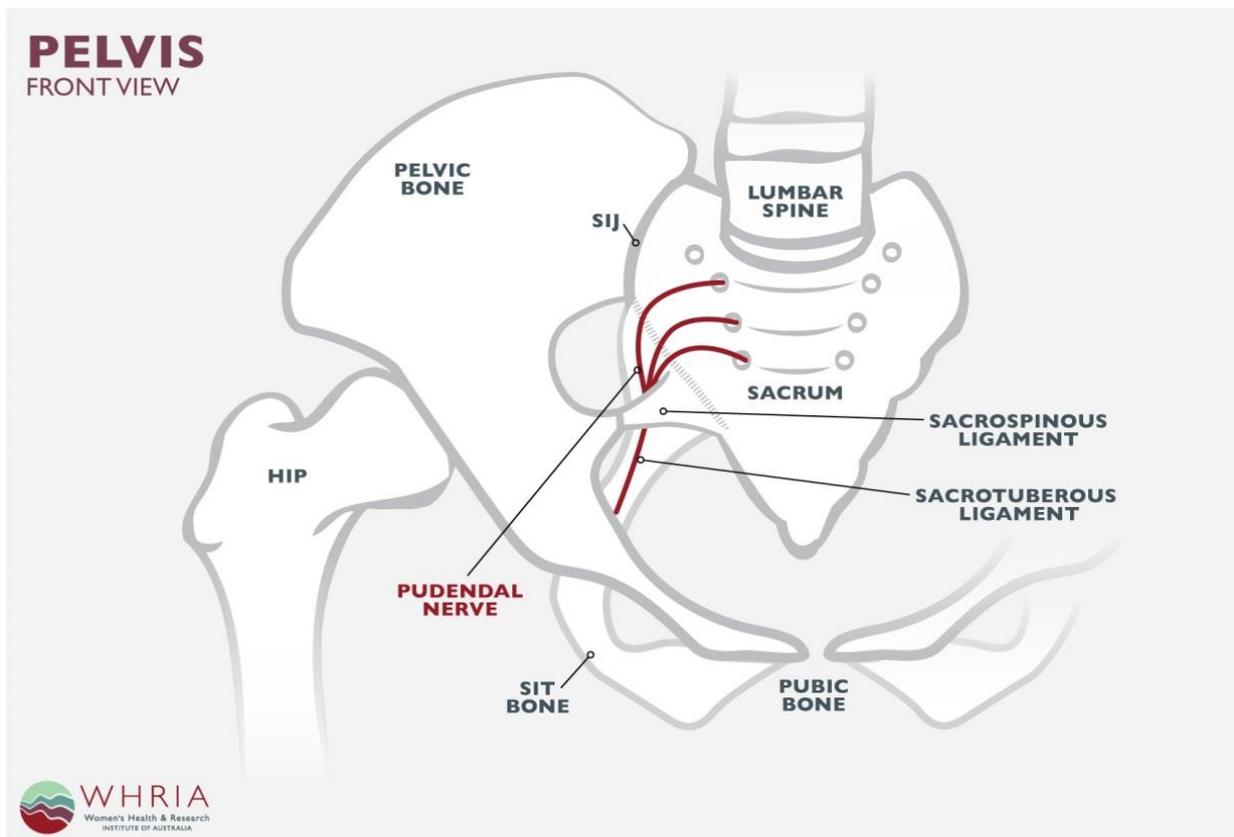
- Pelvic trauma, including a fall onto your coccyx or tailbone/sacrum or a difficult childbirth
- Cycling or intense exercise programs e.g. gym, Pilates/abdominal strengthening
- Postural strain eg prolonged sitting, poor posture or body mechanics, changes in walking style (gait) from old ankle or knee injuries
- Muscle tightness, weakness or imbalances (particularly of the pelvic floor, obturators, abdominals, hip flexors, piriformis/gluteals, adductors, hamstrings)
- Pain/restrictions of your thoracic, lumbar, sacroiliac, pubic symphysis or hip joints
- A stressful life event
- Menopause
- Pelvic or genital surgery
- High pain episodes as a child, teen (eg period pain) or adult
- Born prematurely
- Auto-immune conditions
- Overweight
- Stress and worry
- Trauma (physical or emotional) as a child, teen or adult

This is a long list, but it is quite common to for nerve pain to present many years after these events, as our nervous system is affected by everything around us. Understanding your pain is therapy. This is especially important in the pelvic area as the pelvis has a lot of work to do each day – sitting, walking, running, bladder, bowel and sexual function to name a few!

Manual therapy is an integral part of a conservative treatment approach to Pudendal Neuralgia at WHRIA. If you do require interventional procedures such as injections, BOTOX or sacral neuromodulation Osteopathic treatment can still be beneficial as part of a team approach. Evidence has shown that an interdisciplinary approach (team) to persistent pain provides you with the best chance of recovery.

### **WHY SEE AN OSTEOPATH IF I HAVE PUDENDAL NEURALGIA?**

The joints, muscles and soft tissues of the pelvis (pelvic girdle) and low back can be a source of pelvic pain, as well as have a large influence on increasing the 'signaling' of the pudendal nerve. The ligaments of the sacroiliac joints (SIJ) are continuous with the ligaments the pudendal nerve travels under and adverse tension at the SIJ can trigger pudendal nerve symptoms. Some muscles and fascia (connective tissue) of the hip and buttocks can also trigger nerve pain, from outside the pelvis (buttock muscles), and the inside the pelvis (obturator hip muscles are part of the pelvic floor muscles and the pudendal nerve runs on the inside of the obturator fascia). *See our Video Gallery for a 3D anatomy lesson of the pelvis.*



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Most people we see with pudendal neuralgia have significant muscle over-contraction and subsequent muscle shortening and joint restriction throughout the pelvic girdle. The “hands on” techniques used by your osteopath are gentle and aimed at reducing the mechanical triggers to your pain. This may include trigger point release, myofascial release, muscle and connective tissue treatment and joint motions. An improvement of postural awareness such as how you walk, sit, stand and exercise may also result in better movement and less pain.

Your Osteopath will also assess and treat many common complaints associated with persistent pelvic and perineal pain. These include lower back, middle back and neck pain, dysfunctional breathing patterns, headaches and jaw (TMJ) pain.

The goal of manual therapy for pudendal neuralgia is to release areas of tightness throughout your body, encourage pelvic floor muscle relaxation and improve your overall quality of life.

#### **WHAT CAN I EXPECT AT MY APPOINTMENT?**

Please see *Our Services: [Osteopathy](#)*, for information on what to expect for your first appointment.

Treatment involves manual therapy, pain education and advice on lifestyle, posture, stretches, and exercise. Your Osteopath will also help you to understand why your pain is triggered with certain activities and provide you with self-management techniques.

We are experienced in treating both men and women with pudendal neuralgia, and as everyone's individual presentation is different, treatment is tailored specifically to your needs. Our gentle approach is suitable for everyone, young and old, including people with a sensitive nervous system. We do not manipulate the spine.

Communication amongst your WHRIA team is an important part of your ongoing care. Our focus as osteopaths is your external musculoskeletal pattern, working with our pain medicine specialists and quite often you may need to see another member of our team, such as our pelvic floor physiotherapist to assess your pelvic floor musculature; psychology for tools to manage pain and mental health support. We're also happy to work with your existing team of health professionals outside of WHRIA.

#### **HOW MANY TREATMENTS WILL I NEED?**

Each treatment is specifically designed for your needs and there is no set formula. Initially 1-2 treatments are recommended. Depending on your response an ongoing treatment plan or an appropriate referral will be discussed with you.

You may experience some soreness for 24-48 hrs after treatment, this will be discussed with you at your appointment. Please contact your Osteopath for specific advice if you have any concerns throughout your care.

### I LIVE OUT OF TOWN, IS OSTEOPATHY STILL BENEFICIAL IF I CAN'T HAVE REGULAR TREATMENT?

Yes, we can see you via Telehealth to help you formulate a plan for recovery. We use the Explain Pain resources (from [NOIgroup](#)) and there's so much you can start without physical treatment.

If you are able to come to Sydney, an appointment with one of our highly experienced Osteopaths is recommended when musculoskeletal factors (tight muscles or stiff joints) may be contributing to your Pudendal Neuralgia. Our focus is to provide you with a greater understanding of your pain, self-management tools and strategies to implement at home for your recovery.

Where possible we will refer you to an Osteopath or physiotherapist in your area with experience with pelvic pain and pelvic floor dysfunction to continue regular treatment.

#### Further information

Browse our website for more information about

- [Our Services](#)
- [Our Team Approach \(video gallery\)](#)
- [What to expect at WHRIA for pelvic pain \(Poster and Health Information Sheet\)](#)