

## RECTOCELE REPAIR

A rectocele, in its literal sense, means rectum appearing like a balloon. Perhaps it was referred to this way because a herniating rectum, which this term really describes, may appear balloon-like when protruding into the vagina.

Factors contributing to loss of normal support of the uterus and vagina include any one or a combination of:

- Pregnancy and vaginal childbirth, especially multiple deliveries and those associated with large babies or prolonged, difficult labor
- Menopause
- Aging
- Chronic coughing
- Obesity
- Years of strenuous activity or heavy lifting

The most common complaints associated with a rectocele are constipation, an uncomfortable feeling during sexual intercourse, or a general feeling of discomfort within the vagina (when the rectocele is severe). It is common for women to present with complaints limited to a rectocele. More often, a woman will be evaluated for a cystocele (prolapsed or dropped bladder) or urinary incontinence, and the patient will then often admit it then.

Because they have the same risk factors, a rectocele and cystocele are often present together. It is uncommon to need simultaneous surgical correction of all of these problems.