



URINARY INCONTINENCE

Urinary incontinence is defined as the uncontrolled or involuntary loss of urine of any amount. Urinary incontinence affects as many as 25 million Americans, both men and women. Incontinence is a symptom, not a disease and is never due to “just old age.” Incontinence is a treatable and often curable condition.

There are four different types of incontinence

1. Stress incontinence is the leakage of urine due to increased abdominal pressure when sneezing, laughing, lifting, changing position or exercising (i.e., jogging).
2. Urge incontinence is the leakage of urine due to a strong urge to urinate, usually on the way to the bathroom.
3. Mixed incontinence is a combination of both stress and urge incontinence.
4. Chronic retention of urine / Overflow Incontinence is the leakage that occurs when the bladder cannot fully empty. It may be due to obstruction or injury such as enlarged prostate in men, scarring or narrowing of the urethra (because of previous surgery, congenital defects, STDs or injuries)

Symptoms that you may notice

- Leakage of urine with physical activities such as, exercise, coughing, laughing, sneezing or changing positions
- A strong urge to urinate followed by uncontrollable leakage
- A need to strain when passing urine
- Frequent urination; urinating more than 8 times per day or more than 2 times per night

Prevention

- Maintain a healthy weight. Obesity can lead to incontinence.
- Practice pelvic muscle exercises regularly to strengthen the muscles that support your pelvic organs
- Stop smoking. Coughing due to smoking can increase abdominal pressure and may contribute to stress incontinence. Nicotine may cause frequency and urgency leading to urge incontinence.
- Limit the use of alcohol. Alcohol can cause urgency and frequency leading to incontinence.

- If you suspect a problem, keep a record of your diet and voiding habits and take them with you to your next appointment. This information will help your healthcare professional discuss any concerns you may have.
- Talk to your health care professional and find out how your medications may be affecting your bladder control. Changes in dosage or times may prevent incontinence,
- Be informed. Educate yourself by attending lectures, seminars and health fairs in your community to learn more about the causes of and treatment options for incontinence.

Treatment

- Limit your consumption of bladder irritants: alcohol, caffeine, artificial sweeteners, carbonated beverages, high sugar and citric acid foods and beverages.
- Perform daily exercises to strengthen the pelvic muscles. Studies have shown that the best way to learn to do pelvic floor exercises is to work with a trained healthcare professional. To locate these muscles, try to stop the flow of urine during voiding (do not do this often). Perform quick contractions and long contractions (holding and relaxing). You may do these exercises lying/sitting down or standing throughout the day.
- Retrain your bladder with regular, timed voiding throughout the day. When voiding, try to empty your bladder completely.
- Discuss with your health care professional whether medications that can reduce uncontrollable urges to urinate are right for you. Also, ask about the possibility that your current medications may be affecting your bladder
- PRP, Platelet Rich Plasma, is the process of using your platelets and injecting them into the lower vaginal canal to support bladder tube and control incontinence. This is a very safe and effective tool for bladder control, increasing sexual sensation and vaginal toning.
- Topical bio-identical estrogen and/or testosterone creams restore the tissues that support the vagina and bladder.