

# Urinary Incontinence

## What is Urinary Incontinence?

*Urinary Incontinence is any undesired or accidental leakage of urine.*

Urinary Incontinence can happen for many reasons, such as:

- Urinary tract infections (UTIs)
- Certain medications—diuretics, blood pressure medications, sedatives, muscle relaxants
- Weak bladder and/or pelvic floor muscles
- Blockage from an enlarged prostate gland in men
- Damage to the nerves that control the bladder or pelvic floor muscles
- Long-term constipation
- Vaginal infection or irritation

Complications of chronic urinary incontinence include:

- Rashes, skin infections, and sores
- Increased risk for repeated urinary tract infections (UTIs)
- Decreased quality of life

**Physical therapists can design treatment programs to help people with urinary incontinence regain control over their symptoms, reduce the need for medication and possible surgery, and decrease the need for pads or special undergarments.**



<https://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm426099.htm>

## Quick Facts

- More than 13 million people in the United States experience urinary incontinence
- More common in older adults
- Can affect both women AND men
- Prevalence is higher in women than men until age 80. After age 80 women and men are affected almost equally
- NOT a normal part of aging and can be treated
- Can occur during the day OR night
- Typically occurs if the muscles of the pelvic floor relax without warning
- Urologists are doctors who specialize in urinary problems

# Different Types of Urinary Incontinence

## ***Stress Incontinence***

Urine leaks as pressure is put on the bladder, such as during exercise, coughing, or sneezing

## ***Urge Incontinence***

A sudden need to urinate and can't hold their urine long enough to get to the toilet

## ***Overflow incontinence***

Small amounts of urine leak out of a bladder that is always full due to trouble emptying

## ***Functional Incontinence***

Occurs in people who have normal bladder control, but have a problem getting to the toilet due to conditions or disorders that make it hard to move quickly (i.e. arthritis)

## Treatment Options

- Pelvic muscle exercises
- Biofeedback
- Timed voiding
- Lifestyle changes
- Electrical stimulation
- Developing healthy bladder habits
- Medication
- Surgery



<https://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/pdf/falls/fallpreventionguide-2015-a.pdf>

## ***What Kind of Physical Therapist Can Help?***

- Pelvic floor or women's health specialist
- Experienced in treating pelvic floor dysfunction and urinary incontinence
- Residency or fellowship in women's health
- Women's health clinic specialization



<https://medlineplus.gov/urinaryincontinence.html>

## References

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