

Taking control...of your bladder

What is urinary incontinence?

Urinary incontinence (UI) is when your bladder leaks urine unintentionally.

Types:

1. Stress incontinence
 - leaking with increased effort or exertion such as coughing, laughing or heavy lifting
 - the muscles and tissues in the pelvic floor are not strong enough to resist external pressure
2. Urge incontinence
 - leaking with a very strong urge to empty your bladder
 - the sensation to empty your bladder can occur even if your bladder is not full
 - the bladder muscle is overactive
3. Mixed incontinence
 - a combination of stress and urge incontinence

It is good to know which type of incontinence you have because the causes and treatments are different.



Risk Factors

- Pelvic surgery
- Chronic conditions: stroke, Parkinson's Disease, diabetes, etc.
- Side effects of medications
- Chronic cough
- Obesity
- Lack of regular exercise
- Child birth
- Menopause
- Prostate surgery



Age-Related Factors

- Natural enlargement of the prostate in men
- Loss of estrogen in women
- Decreased bladder capacity
- Decreased sensation to bladder
- Weakened pelvic muscles
- Decreased ability to postpone voiding

Over 33 million Canadians are affected by UI. One quarter of middle aged or older women and 15% of all men 60+ have UI.

Normal fluid intake is about 6-8 cups of water or other drinks per day. Drinking more or less than this amount can make leaking worse.



Tips to Prevent the Leak

- Triggers to avoid—caffeine, alcohol, acidic foods, tomato based and spicy foods, smoking.



- Achieve a healthy body weight by eating a nutritious diet and getting regular exercise
- Drink 6-8 cups of fluid per day, two-thirds of which should be water
- Avoid constipation
- Regular toileting every 2-3 hours

Exercises to Prevent the Leak

1. Pelvic floor exercises

- Stand, sit or lie down with your knees slightly apart and relax. Squeeze the muscles you would use to hold back urine or gas. Tighten the muscles for 10-15 seconds, maintaining normal breathing. Relax for 10 seconds. Repeat 12-20 times, 3-5x/day.

2. Pelvic Floor Lifts

- Sit with good posture, keeping your back flat. Breathe in, and on the exhale draw your belly button towards your spine. Hold 5-10 seconds. Repeat 10 times.

3. Leaning Back on a Chair (abdominals)

- Move to the edge of your chair.
 - Level 1: Place your hands on your thighs
 - Level 2: Hands crossed over your chest
 - Level 3: Hands lightly behind your ears
- Sit up and pull your belly button into your spine as though you are trying to zip up a pair of pants. Lean back from the hips, while maintaining your posture. Keep your chin horizontal to the ground and do not lay back against the chair. Return to starting position. Repeat 10-12 times.

4. Adductor (inner thigh) Exercises

- With a fist, stress ball, or other small ball in between your legs, squeeze inner thighs together and hold for 3-4 seconds. Repeat 10-12 times.



**For more information and resources
for older adults, contact
Forever...in motion at
(306)655-2286 or (306)655-2285.**



References

1. Canadian Continence Foundation. (2014). Bladder Health. Retrieved from: <http://www.canadiancontinence.ca/EN/>
2. Saskatchewan Pelvic Floor Pathway (2013). Information for Women About Incontinence & Vaginal Prolapse.