

## **Female Urinary Incontinence**

Urinary incontinence, or urine leakage, in women is extremely common. In a recently published survey of 23.5 million women, 38% said they had suffered at least one episode of urinary incontinence in the last year. Among these women with urinary leakage, 13.7% said they suffered incontinence every day and an additional 10% of these women suffered with incontinence at least once per week. In addition, as women get older, daily incontinence becomes even more common. Of women in their early 60's, over 10% have daily incontinence. This increases to 21% of women aged 85 and older.

### **How is Urinary Incontinences Diagnosed?**

As with any medical problem, a good history and physical examination are performed. A urologist will often ask about the individual's voiding habits and fluid intake as well as their medical, surgical and family history. A thorough physical examination is necessary to look for any easily correctable causes of urine leakage. Usually a urinalysis is performed and your urine may be sent for a culture to check for the presence of a urinary tract infection. Depending on the findings, further testing may be recommended.

Cystoscopy is performed by placing a small scope or camera through the urethra and into the bladder. Urodynamics is an outpatient test that is done with a tiny tube in the bladder inserted through the urethra and often with a second small tube in the rectum. The bladder is filled and the patient is asked to void while pressure measurements are recorded.

### **Are there different types of urinary incontinence?**

**Stress urinary incontinence:** Stress incontinence is urine leakage that is caused by physical activities like coughing or laughing, sneezing, lifting, straining, getting out of a chair or bending over. This leakage is thought to be caused by weakening or stretching of the muscles in the pelvis that support the bladder and associated structures.

**Urgency incontinence:** This kind of urinary incontinence is commonly referred to as an "overactive bladder". Urgency incontinence occurs when the individual experiences a sudden, strong urge to urinate such that they do not have the inability to get to the toilet in time

**Mixed urinary incontinence:** Mixed incontinence is a combination of both stress incontinence and urgency incontinence.

### **How is Urinary Incontinence Treated?**

Treatment for urinary incontinence depends on the severity and type of incontinence. In most cases, conservative or minimally-invasive management is the first line of treatment. This may include fluid

management, bladder training or pelvic floor exercises. Additionally, medications can prove very successful in the management of urinary incontinence. However, when the symptoms are more severe or when conservative measures are not adequate, surgery may be available to treat this condition.

**Where can I get more information?**

For more information call or schedule an appointment with your Urologist, Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner, or Physician Assistant.

For additional online information:

- For stress incontinence, visit [\*It's Time to Talk About SUJ.\*](#)
- For overactive bladder, visit [\*It's Time to Talk About OAB.\*](#)