

What is Urinary Incontinence?

Urinary incontinence is leakage of urine which causes social, hygienic and quality of life issues. It affects 1 in 3 women who have had children.

There are many different types and the most common are:

- Stress Urinary Incontinence:

- Leakage of urine during activities such as cough, sneeze, laughing, exercise or lifting.

- Treatment includes pelvic floor exercises supervised by a trained pelvic floor physiotherapist or continence nurse. [[Click for list of physios](#)]

- Surgery may be an option if simple measures fail.

- Urodynamics studies would be required before any surgery is considered.

- [[Click for Urodynamics information sheet](#)]

- Urgency Urinary Incontinence or Overactive Bladder: [[Click for information](#)]

- The inability to delay going to the toilet (urgency) causing social embarrassment, going to the toilet frequently and getting up at night. Leakage of urine on the way to the toilet which may be triggered by other factors such as running water or putting the key in the lock.

- Treatment includes bladder retraining exercises by a trained pelvic floor physiotherapist or continence nurse. [[Click for list of physios](#)]

- Medications such as vaginal estrogen and other medications in tablet form.

- Occasionally surgical options are available.

- Mixed Urinary Incontinence:

A combination of stress and urgency urinary incontinence and both types need to be treated.

- What can I do if I have these symptoms?

- Talk to your GP to start some simple investigations such as a urine test.

- Lose weight if you are overweight as this puts pressure on the pelvic floor and worsens symptoms.

- Drink enough water (1 ½ to 2 liters each day) to ensure the urine to the bladder is dilute.

- Don't drink too much tea and coffee or caffeine containing drinks (1-2 per day only).

- Don't smoke, coughing damages the pelvic floor and worsens symptoms.

- Avoid constipation, as the straining while doing a poo damages the pelvic nerves and worsens symptoms. Drink enough water each day and add fibre supplements such as Metamucil.

- Talk to a continence advisor at National Continence Helpline Freecall on 1800 33 00 66

- [[Click for link to CFA website](#)]

- See a physiotherapist with an interest in pelvic floor problems [[Click for list of physios](#)]