

Urinary Incontinence

Urinary incontinence is the leakage of urine at inappropriate times. With incontinence, you may have trouble starting the urine stream or holding urine when you feel a strong urge to go.

There are different types of incontinence:

- Stress incontinence – small amounts of urine leak when there is increased pressure on the bladder.
- Urge incontinence – your bladder muscle goes into spasm, and, if the spasm is severe enough, medium to large amounts of urine may leak; this might happen only occasionally or as often as every 15 to 20 minutes.
- Mixed incontinence – you have both stress and urge incontinence.
- Functional incontinence – urine leaks when you can't get to the bathroom in time.

HOW A PHYSICAL THERAPIST CAN HELP

Your physical therapist will perform an examination to identify the causes of your urinary incontinence and determine whether you should be referred to a physician for additional tests. Based on the evaluation results, your physical therapist will create individualize treatments to strengthen your pelvic-floor muscles and improve their function. Your physical therapist can help you:

- Gain control over your symptoms.
- Reduce the need for pads and special undergarments, incontinence medications, and possibly surgery.

Additionally, your physical therapist can provide information about:

- Diet and nutrition to avoid food and drinks that may irritate the bladder.
- Changing behaviors that make symptoms worse.
- Ways to decrease urinary urge and frequency.



According to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, more than

13 million US citizens have incontinence.