



## Urinary Incontinence

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Urinary incontinence is the loss of bladder control leading to involuntary urination. This can be the result of many factors and there are several options for management of the condition.

Individuals with urinary incontinence may experience a strong, sudden, urgent and uncontrollable need to urinate, frequent urination and also involuntary loss of urine or “leaking”.

### Causes

Some causes of urinary continence include the following:

- Weak muscles in the lower urinary tract
- Problems in the nerves that control urination
- Physiological status such as pregnancy, childbirth, weight gain or other conditions that stretch pelvic floor muscles
- Overactive bladder muscle
- Urinary tract infection (UTI)
- Constipation
- Bladder cancer or bladder stones
- Blockage within the urinary tract
- Removal of the uterus (hysterectomy)
- Neurological disorders

### Types of urinary incontinence

Urinary incontinence can be categorized into five basic types depending on the symptoms:

- Stress Incontinence
- Urge Incontinence
- Overflow Incontinence
- Functional Incontinence
- Mixed Incontinence

- Stress Incontinence: Leakage of small amounts of urine during physical movement such as coughing, sneezing, lifting heavy objects, and straining that suddenly increases the pressure within the abdomen.
- Leakage of large amounts of urine at unexpected times, including during sleep.
- Overflow Incontinence: Uncontrollable leakage of small amounts of urine because of an incompletely emptied bladder.
- Functional Incontinence: This refers to urine loss resulting from inability to get to a toilet.
- Mixed Incontinence: Mixed incontinence is the presence of two or more types of incontinence in an individual. Most commonly, urge and stress incontinence occur together.

### Diagnosis

Symptoms are mainstay of diagnosis and additional tests may be ordered to identify and confirm the cause for incontinence. These tests include bladder stress test, urine analysis and urine culture, ultrasound diagnosis, cystoscopy and urodynamics.

### Treatment

Treatment depends on the cause, sex of the patient (women are more likely to suffer from urinary incontinence than men), type and severity of the incontinence. Treatment options include medications, injections, vaginal devices and behavioural therapy that include pelvic floor exercises, bladder retraining, electrical stimulation and catheterisation. If these conservative treatment measures fail, your doctor may recommend surgical intervention.