

Urinary Incontinence

Facts about Urinary Incontinence

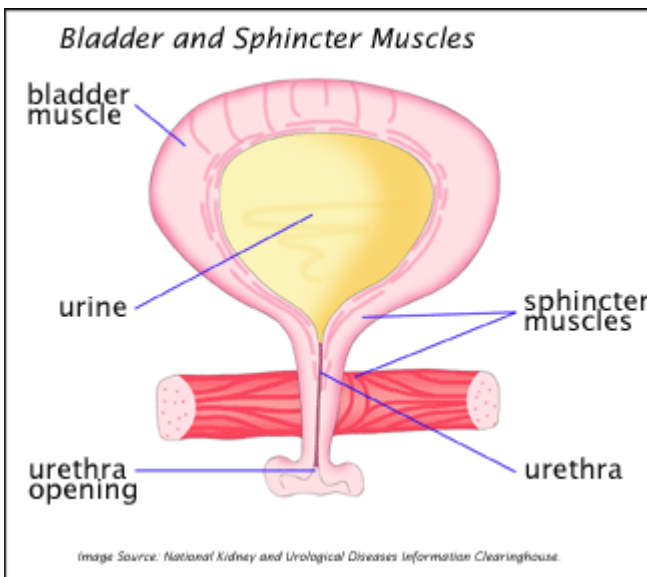
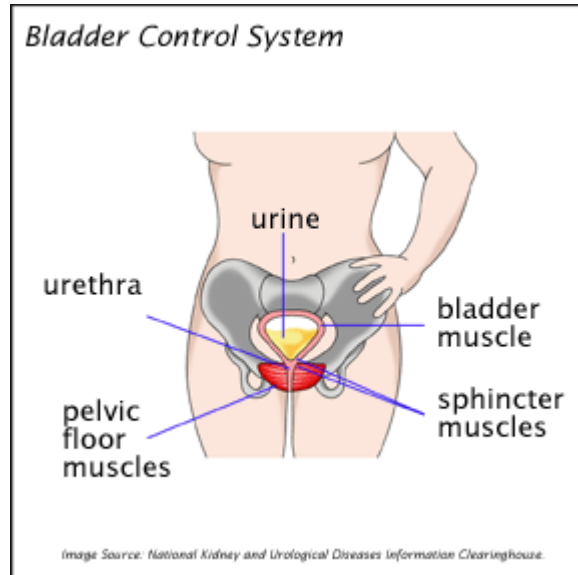
Urinary Incontinence (UI) is the accidental or unwanted leakage of urine. UI affects more than 50% of women over the age of 45 and 12% of women under the age of 30. Unfortunately 80% of women do not seek help.

What is normal?

- Emptying your bladder every 3-4 hours (4 to 8 times in 24 hours)
- Getting up once a night to urinate
- Running, jumping, sneezing or coughing without "leaking".

What isn't normal?

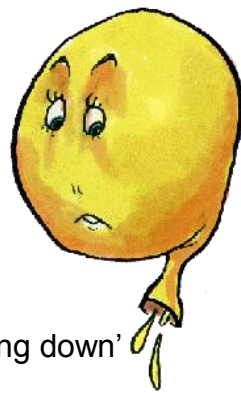
- Not being able to hold your urine until you reach a nearby bathroom
- Getting up more than once a night to urinate
- Leaking urine when doing activities



Why do women experience UI?

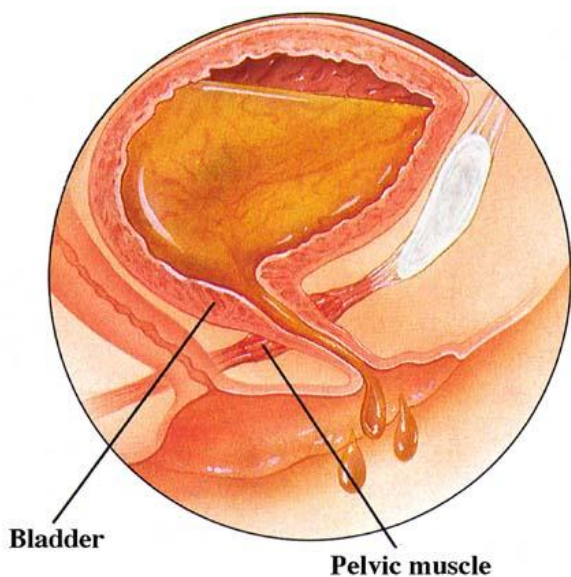
Women experience UI because of the physical changes that occur during pregnancy, childbirth and menopause.

- Childbearing can stretch the pelvic muscles and damage nerves and tissue in the bladder's neck.
- The position of the uterus, bladder and bladder neck may change and affect your ability to control your bladder.
- A drop in estrogen during menopause can weaken pelvic and vaginal muscles and tissues and increase the likelihood of incontinence



What can you do?

- Exercise your pelvic floor muscles
- Take care when you cough or sneeze. Lift and hold pelvic floor muscles to avoid 'bearing down' and straining. Remember to look after your back as well.
- Stay regular. Constipation can strain your pelvic floor, so eat lots of fibre and drink plenty of fluids.
- Limit your intake of Caffeine. Caffeine increases your urge to go to the toilet.
- Don't go to the toilet 'just in case'. Train your bladder to hold more urine by delaying trips to the toilet. Remember, the norm is to go to the toilet 4-8 times a day. Keep your weight down. Being overweight is just extra load for your pelvic floor muscles to carry.



What can a physiotherapist do?

- We take a thorough history and assess your pelvic floor muscles using manual techniques and biofeedback machines.
- We use the biofeedback machine to help re-train your pelvic floor.
- We use manual resistance and muscle facilitation techniques to achieve the correct muscle activity.
- We give you exercises to do at home.
- We also assess for muscle weakness in your core muscles and teach strengthening exercises if they are weak.
- We help you return to your normal daily and sporting activities without leaking!

Remember, it is not normal to leak, even a little bit.

Visit your doctor and ask for a referral to our Women's Health Centre, which deals specifically with Urinary Incontinence.



This information sheet is prepared as a service for our clients. It is not intended to be a complete guide to the subject. This information should NOT be used in place of a visit with your health care provider, nor should you disregard the advice of your health care provider because of any information you read on this sheet.

Revised April 2009