

Beaumont[®] | HEALTH
SYSTEM

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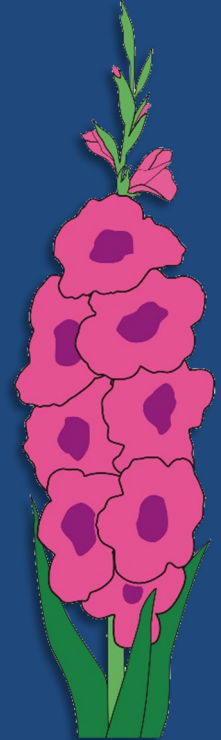
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Funding: National Institute on Aging - 1R01AG043383-01A1

**Group
Learning
Achieves
Decreased
Incidents
of Lower
Urinary
Symptoms**



THE
Gladiolus
PROJECT

WHAT IS URINARY INCONTINENCE?

Many women, young and old, suffer from urinary incontinence, the unwanted leakage of urine. It is estimated that 1 in 3 women experience some type of urinary incontinence. Yet, because of embarrassment or the belief that it is a normal part of growing older, many women do not seek help. They may find it difficult to discuss their incontinence problems, even with a nurse or doctor. You should know that urinary incontinence is common and very treatable. Millions of women are being successfully treated and even cured.

CAUSES OF URINARY INCONTINENCE

Sometimes incontinence is temporary and can be reversed once the cause is found and treated, such as a urinary tract infection.

TYPES OF INCONTINENCE

There are different types of incontinence, and some people have more than one type. The most common types of incontinence are described below.

1. STRESS INCONTINENCE

Women with stress incontinence leak urine because they have weak bladder support and pelvic muscles. If you have stress incontinence, you may leak urine when you:

- Sneeze, cough, or laugh
- Walk or do other exercise

It is important to understand that stress incontinence should not be confused with the psychological stress of daily living. Instead, it refers to physical stress or pressure on your bladder.

The main treatment for stress incontinence is improving pelvic floor muscle strength and control.

BLADDER CONTROL STRATEGIES

REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

The Learning Curve is gradual

- It takes time - not overnight like drugs or surgery

The Learning Curve is not usually smooth

- There will be ups and downs
- Good days and bad days

Your Progress will depend on you

- You can take control of your bladder
- Practice Makes Perfect!
- You can do it!
- Remember: "MIND OVER BLADDER"

So do your

- **Pelvic Floor Muscle Exercises**
- Use the **Squeeze Trick** to prevent leakage
- Practice **Urge Suppression** to control urgency
- Follow a **Bladder Training** schedule

Remember to listen to the CD and do your pelvic floor muscle exercises TODAY. Keep retraining your bladder.



BLADDER CONTROL STRATEGIES

What do I do to calm urgency before it is time to go to the bathroom?

- Focus on another body sensation. Deep breathing is good. Sit down and take five slow, deep breaths. Think about the air moving in and out of your lungs instead of how your bladder feels.
- Squeeze your pelvic floor muscles five times quickly and strongly. Or you could try holding one strong squeeze of your pelvic floor muscles. Often, this will relax the bladder so that the feeling of urgency goes away.
- Distract yourself by focusing on an activity like a mind game that will turn your attention away from your bladder urges (e.g. counting backward from 100 by 7s).
- Do a task that requires a lot of thought—for example, balance your checkbook, plan the weekly food menus, or some other activity that focuses your thinking.
- Use self-talk or good self-statements. Tell yourself: “I am the boss, not my bladder.” “I am in control.” Create one that fits your situation and personality the best. Keep saying this statement over and over until the feeling of urgency passes.
- Sometimes you will need to perform more than one of these approaches before the feeling of urgency goes away. If at first you do not succeed, do not give up. Remember, it takes practice to gain control over urgency.

WHAT IS URINARY INCONTINENCE?

2. URGENCY INCONTINENCE

Urgency incontinence is losing urine when you feel a strong need to go to the bathroom and don't make it in time. You may also experience both urgency and frequency sometimes called overactive bladder (OAB). If you have urgency incontinence, you may leak urine when you:

- Can't get to the bathroom quickly enough.
- Hear or touch running water.
- Drink even a small amount of liquid.

The main treatments for urgency incontinence are bladder training, pelvic floor muscle exercises, and bladder control strategies.

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR BLADDER AND URINE CONTROL

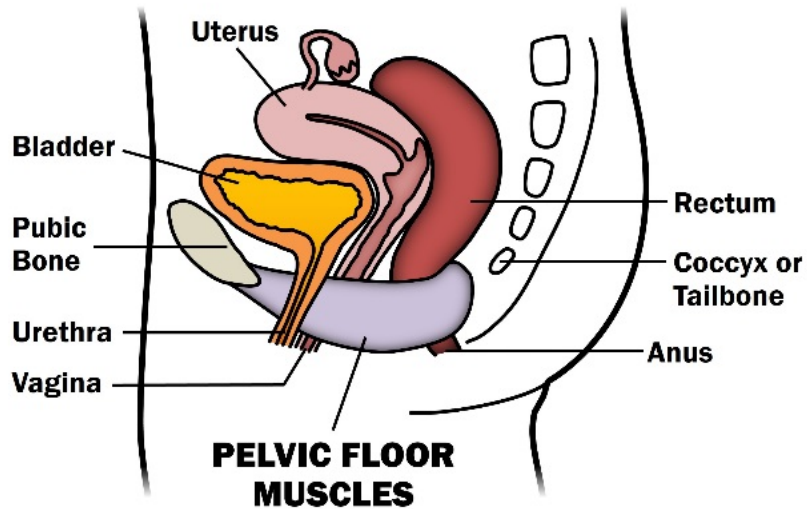
THE PARTS OF THE LOWER URINARY TRACT

The bladder stores urine produced by the kidneys. The bladder changes shape when there is more or less urine in it. When empty, it resembles a deflated balloon or is flat as a pancake. As it fills with urine, its shape looks like a football. The urethra is a small, slender tube that starts at the bottom of the bladder and goes to the outside of the body. In women, the urethra is about 1½ inches long.

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR BLADDER AND URINE CONTROL

MUSCLES IN THE PELVIS

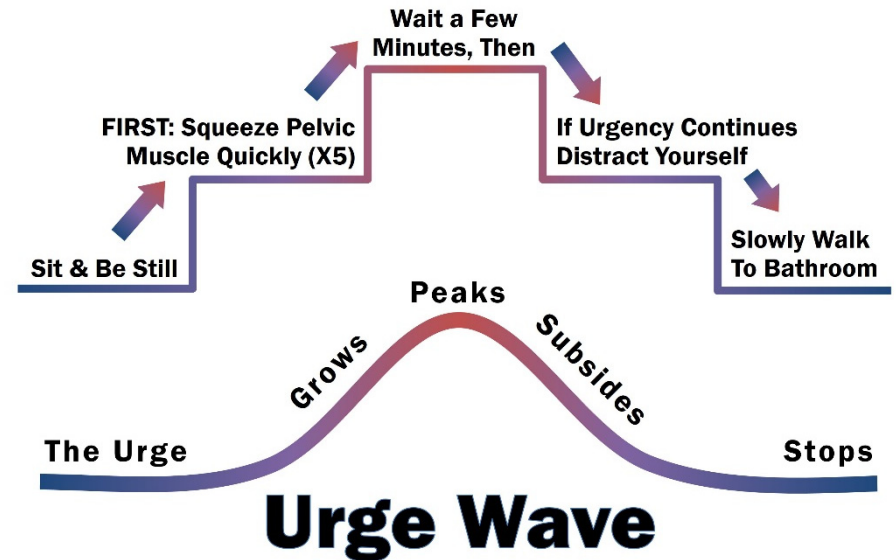
The sphincter muscles are like a “clamp” that surrounds the urethra, keeping it closed until you want to urinate. The pelvic floor muscles are a group of muscles that go from the front to the back of the pelvis, around the urethra, vagina, and rectum, forming a sling that supports the pelvic organs.



URINATION – EMPTYING YOUR BLADDER

The muscles of the bladder are relaxed while it fills with urine. When the bladder is full, a signal is sent to the brain that creates an urge to urinate. This is different from “urgency” (a sudden strong desire to urinate that is hard—or impossible—to delay). When you feel that urinating is appropriate (the right place and time), you relax your urinary sphincter, the bladder muscle contracts, and the flow of urine begins. If you are not near a bathroom, you can use your pelvic floor muscles to help you control your bladder and keep from leaking.

BLADDER CONTROL STRATEGIES



Bladder Training

- If you are going more often than every 3 hours, you should work to go less often. Bladder Training can give you strategies to not urinate often.
- Bladder training teaches you to urinate on a schedule
- And to increase time between visits to the bathroom

Getting Started with Bladder Training

- Start with the voiding interval written on the card you got in class.
- Go to the bathroom on that schedule for at least a week.
- When comfortable, try to add 10-15 minutes to your interval each week.
- The goal is to reach an average of 3 to 4 hours between bathroom visits.

BLADDER CONTROL STRATEGIES

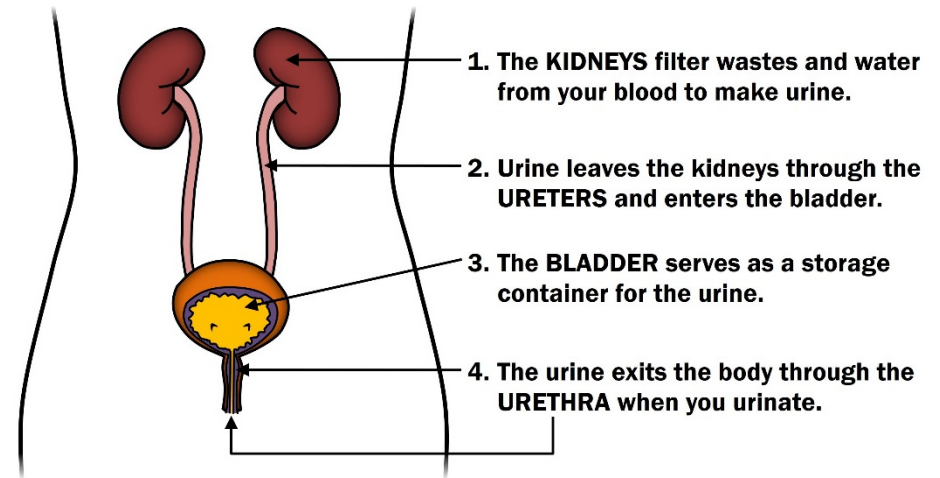
WHEN TO USE YOUR PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLES

The Squeeze Trick – “Squeeze Before You Sneeze”

- A well timed muscle squeeze can avoid leakage.
- If you are about to lift something or cough or sneeze or blow your nose – then squeeze your pelvic floor muscles first to keep the bladder outlet closed and prevent leakage.
- It will take practice, but you can learn to do it quickly.

Controlling Bladder Urgency – remember this picture of the Urge wave – it was shown in the class. Follow the steps:

- As the urge starts - Do NOT rush to the toilet – this makes it harder to control the urge and keep from leaking.
- INSTEAD, stop, sit down if you can, and stay still.
- First - Squeeze your pelvic floor muscles a few times. Don't relax in between squeezes.
- Relax the rest of your body and take a couple slow deep breaths.
- Concentrate on suppressing the urge.
- WAIT until the urge calms down.
- Then walk calmly at a normal pace to the bathroom.



CONTROLLING YOUR BLADDER WITH YOUR PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLES

FINDING YOUR PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLES

Imagine you are in an elevator full of people and you feel the urge to pass gas. What do you do? You tighten or squeeze the ring of muscles around your rectum—your pelvic floor muscles. Try to tighten the muscles now. You should feel a lifting sensation in the area around the vagina and a pulling in of your rectum. The pelvic floor muscles tighten together – front (urine) and back (gas).

THE BASIC PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLE EXERCISE

To exercise the pelvic floor muscles, you will squeeze and then relax them. Both steps are to be done with control. Be sure to relax completely between each muscle squeeze. One pelvic floor muscle exercise is when you squeeze or tighten your muscles and hold and then relax the muscles for the same amount of time.

CONTROLLING YOUR BLADDER WITH YOUR PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLES

EACH SESSION

- Start with 5 fast squeezes – just quickly squeeze and release your pelvic floor muscles.
- Next do 10 slow squeezes.
 - Hold 2 to 10 seconds as you are able.
 - Then relax for 10 seconds after each squeeze.

Then do 3 sessions like this every day.

WHERE AND HOW TO PRACTICE THESE EXERCISES

You can do the exercises anywhere and anytime. Start learning to exercise by lying on your back. Once you feel comfortable that you are exercising correctly, you can do them in other positions like sitting and standing.

If you leak urine only in one particular position, such as when you stand, do more exercises in that position or add more exercises each day in that position.

Once you master this skill, you can do these exercises anywhere – standing in line or in the shower - sitting at a computer or at red lights.

CORRECTING COMMON MISTAKES

- When you squeeze the pelvic floor muscles, DO NOT tighten your thighs, buttocks, or stomach. If you feel your stomach move, then you are also using these muscles. If someone were watching you, they shouldn't see anything move. The pelvic floor muscles are inside.

- DO NOT hold your breath when exercising. Breathe normally, count out loud, or both.

CAN THESE EXERCISES HARM ME?

No, these exercises cannot harm you in any way. You should find them easy and relaxing. If you get back or stomach pain after you exercise, you are probably trying too hard and using your stomach muscles when you should not. If you get headaches, then you are also tensing your neck and shoulder muscles and probably holding your breath. If your back or hips hurt, you are also tensing your buttock or thigh muscles. So if you have any pain, you are squeezing too hard – do a more medium squeeze.

MAKE IT A HABIT

Use something you do every day to help you remember to exercise:

- Brushing your teeth
- Watching a favorite TV program
- Feeding the dog or the cat

Use your GLADIOLUS magnet as a reminder!

WHAT IF YOU FALL OFF THE WAGON?

Don't worry – Just pick it back up.

The sooner you start back, the sooner you will improve.