

Treatment Options



Kegel exercises strengthen the pelvic floor muscles. You contract the muscles that prevent urination, holding for 10 seconds, then relaxing. Try doing three sets of 10 each day. They can be done anywhere: while sitting, standing, or lying down.

A pessary is a plastic device used for multiple gynecologic problems, including stress incontinence. The pessary helps support the bladder.



Bladder training can be helpful in treating urge incontinence.

If exercise and bladder training don't work, there are various operations that may help.



Sutures placed to support bladder after tearing



Don't drink fluids in excess. Alcohol and liquids containing caffeine are diuretics and will make your incontinence worse. Space fluid intake throughout the day.

FROM THE DESK OF

NOTES

How Is Urinary Incontinence Treated?

Strengthening pelvic floor muscles is usually the first step in managing stress incontinence. Tightening these muscles is called a Kegel exercise. If Kegel exercises do not help, special physical therapy may improve bladder control. This therapy includes biofeedback and electrical stimulation.

Special devices, called pessaries, are also available to treat stress incontinence. These devices can be used to support organs such as the bladder. Sometimes pessaries are useful when urine is lost only during certain activities, such as jogging, aerobics, and horseback riding.

The first step in treating urge incontinence is usually training the bladder to empty (void) at certain times. The goal is for 3 hours to pass before the need to void during the daytime without any leaking. Sometimes medicines can help with bladder training. These drugs may cause dry mouth or eyes but are generally well tolerated. Various operations can also be used for stress incontinence. Specialists such as gynecologists or urologists do these operations.

DOs and DON'Ts in Managing Urinary Incontinence:

- ✓ **DO** your Kegel exercises as directed.
- ✓ **DO** take your medicine as directed.
- ⊘ **DON'T** drink lots of liquids containing caffeine (e.g., coffee, black tea, sodas). Caffeine can make the kidneys produce more urine faster than normal. Both stress and urge incontinence will get worse, and you will void more often.
- ⊘ **DON'T** drink excessive amounts of alcohol. Alcohol is also a diuretic.
- ⊘ **DON'T** drink large amounts of fluids during the day or at one time.
- ⊘ **DON'T** drink liquids after 7 to 8 pm if you get up more than twice during the night to urinate.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the following sources:

- National Association for Continence
Tel: (800) 252-3337
Web: www.nafc.org
- American Urological Association
Tel: (866) 746-4282
Web: www.urologyhealth.org
- Simon Foundation for Continence
Tel: (800) 237-4666
Web: www.simonfoundation.org