



Information sheet: Urinary incontinence

Urinary incontinence is perhaps the most wide spread, least known affliction of the general population.

It is defined as bothersome urinary leakage causing a social or hygiene problem. Although it is not life threatening, it can severely affect your quality of life. It can be mild (occasional leakage of small amounts) or it can be severe (daily leakage, wearing pads and avoiding normal activities/sports) It's your body's way of telling you that things are not quite as they should be.

Symptoms can include:

- frequency of urination
- urgency (sudden and uncontrollable desire to go to the toilet)
- urge incontinence (leaking before you can get to the toilet)
- stress incontinence (leaking associated with activity, change of position, coughing, sneezing)

People are often reluctant to seek help but there is a great deal of help available (physiotherapy/specialist nurses, medications, life style changes, surgery)

Some improvement in symptoms is possible for nearly everyone with incontinence. It is most common in women who have had children but it can also affect children, men and women without children.

Physiotherapy treatment involves assessment (you may be asked to complete a bladder diary) and depending on your symptoms:

- bladder retraining
- pelvic floor muscle rehabilitation (this takes motivation and patience, and can take weeks to notice improvement)
- advice and education on normal bladder habits

You may need several visits to check that you are working the correct muscles and to help maintain motivation.

I can also offer assessment and treatment for pain associated with bladder problems (e.g. interstitial cystitis).

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