



Urinary Incontinence

It doesn't have to slow you down

Urinary incontinence (leaking urine) is common—especially as we get older—but it is **not** a normal part of aging. It's usually a sign of another issue, and many people improve with simple changes. You don't need to feel embarrassed. Your doctor talks about this every day and can help you find relief.

Urinary incontinence can interfere with your day-to-day life, keep you from participating in routine and fun activities and take a toll on your emotional health. If you experience urine leaking, talking with your primary care provider (PCP) is an important part of staying healthy. There are many ways to control or manage bladder leakage. Your PCP and care team can discuss which options may be right for you, such as lifestyle changes, pelvic floor exercises, medication, or other medical treatments.

What can cause urinary incontinence?

- For women: pregnancy, childbirth, and menopause can weaken bladder muscles
- For men: prostate problems or prostate surgery can lead to leakage
- Anyone can have temporary leakage from infections, constipation, or certain medications

Types and symptoms

Stress incontinence – This is the most common type of urinary incontinence in women. It causes small leaks of urine when you sneeze, cough, laugh, jog or do other things that put pressure on your bladder. Men may also experience this after prostate surgery.

Talk to your PCP about treatment options such as pelvic floor (Kegel) exercises. Squeeze the muscles you use to stop your urine and hold for three seconds. Relax for three seconds and repeat 10-15 times. Do these three or more times per day.

Urge incontinence – Also known as overactive bladder, this occurs when the urge to urinate is so strong that you may not reach the bathroom in time, even when your bladder only contains a small amount of urine.

Talk to your PCP about treatment options such as cutting back on foods that can cause irritation. These can include citrus fruits, chocolate (not white chocolate), tomato-based food, vinegar, spicy foods, alcohol, caffeine and soda. Training your bladder by waiting longer between trips to the bathroom may help as well.

Overflow incontinence – This most often occurs due to prostate problems that cause the bladder to stay full, overflow and leak. Signs include frequent small urination throughout the day or ongoing dribbling.

Steps you can take to help

- Pay attention to your diet. Certain foods and drinks can irritate your bladder.
- Do pelvic floor (Kegel) exercises to strengthen your muscles used to start and stop the flow of urine.
- Take enough time to completely empty your bladder when urinating.
- Consider wearing absorbent pads or underpants to help keep your skin dry and protected from irritation.

Talk to your PCP

Schedule an appointment with your PCP or a urologist and share a list of your symptoms, all medications (even over-the-counter vitamins and herbal remedies), health conditions and surgeries. If you don't have a PCP or need to find a urologist, Call Member Services at 1-833-554-2335 or visit [ParamountHealthcare.com](https://www.paramounthealthcare.com) and click on Find a Provider.

Learn more by visiting the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases website at niddk.nih.gov (under Urologic Diseases) and The Urology Care Foundation at urologyhealth.org.

These recommendations are for your information only. They do not take the place of your doctor's advice, diagnosis or treatment. You should make decisions about your care with your doctor. What is covered by your plan will be based on your specific benefit plan.