

Women's Health: Incontinence and How to Improve

Do you leak urine when you laugh, cough, sneeze, run or jump? Have you stopped being active because you leak urine when you do these activities? Do you find yourself mapping out the nearest bathroom when you're leaving your home? Is it challenging to make it to the bathroom in time when you get the urge? Have you restricted your water consumption to keep from having to use the restroom so often? Do you go to the bathroom more than 8 times during the day? If you answered YES to one or more of these questions, you're not alone.

Urinary incontinence is the involuntary leakage of urine. Whether it's a very small or large amount, it's a very common and treatable condition. There are many types of incontinence, but the most commonly seen are urgency and stress incontinence. Urgency incontinence describes involuntary leakage that occurs when the patient has a strong desire to urinate. The bladder contracts to empty when the patient doesn't intend it to. Stress incontinence is involuntary leakage during physical exertion such as with coughing, sneezing, lifting, or exercising."

Danielle Weber, Doctor of Physical Therapy at 21st Century Rehab at Greene County Medical Center, has specialized training in the treatment of urinary incontinence, pelvic pain, lower back pain, pregnancy and postpartum pain and dysfunction. Danielle states, "Every woman could benefit from a session with a Pelvic Floor Practitioner. So many women are affected by pelvic issues, and it doesn't need to be seen as embarrassing. While these issues are extremely common, they are not a normal part of aging." Nearly 1 in 4 women over the age of 18 experience episodes of

involuntary leakage, and 1 in 5 adults over the age of 40 experience overactive bladder or recurring urgency and frequency. Many women are told to perform Kegel exercises; However, many women are not able to perform these correctly. Furthermore, in cases where the pelvic floor is hypertonic (too much muscle tone), Kegel exercises could also make symptoms worse.



Doctor Of Physical Therapy, Danielle Weber

The pelvic floor is made up of three layers of muscles which act as a sling, supporting the pelvic organs and aiding in core stabilization. These muscles have to be able to work through a full range of motion and respond to the demands of movement and exercise in order to be able to do these activities without leakage or pain. The bladder may also need retraining. Sometimes, if a person is urinating too frequently, the bladder will need training in order to extend the length between

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bathroom breaks. When we get used to going to the bathroom “just in case” to avoid leakage, we are allowing the bladder to empty without completely filling. The bladder needs to be able to fill completely prior to emptying.

Normal urination patterns include: urinating 5-8 times in a 24 hour period with 2-4 hours in between trips to the bathroom. Hydration also plays an important role in bladder control. “If the urine is concentrated with irritants it will cause irritation and contraction which can result in an episode of incontinence.” If you would like to learn more about urinary incontinence or other related issues or think you could benefit from an evaluation with a women's health specialist, call 515-386-4282 and request a visit with Danielle. If you'd like to be seen at another location, visit 21stCenturyRehab.com and schedule an appointment with one of our other women's health specialists.