

Types of Incontinence

Stress Urinary Incontinence

What is it?

This is the most common type of urinary incontinence, particularly among women. It occurs because of weak pelvic floor muscles and/or a deficient urethral sphincter. It may follow childbirth, the menopause, prostate surgery or radiotherapy treatment.

Symptoms

The bladder leaks during exercise, coughing, sneezing, laughing, heavy lifting or any other bodily movement that puts pressure on the bladder.

What treatment is available?

- The treatment for this condition relies on accurate and comprehensive assessment
- Regular, correctly performed pelvic floor exercises will help to alleviate this symptom.
- A specialist physiotherapist or nurse can assess and grade pelvic floor muscle tone and check that pelvic floor muscle exercises are being correctly performed. Following this assessment an individualized treatment and exercise plan will be put in place for 3-6 months.
- Constipation can make this symptom worse, as can drinking liquids containing caffeine – advise gradual reduction of caffeine intake (if caffeine is withdrawn too quickly it can lead to caffeine withdrawal headaches).
- Teaching the individual the double-voiding technique (see advice sheet: Successful Bladder Emptying) might also help to alleviate symptoms.
- If appropriate, weight reduction can have a significant impact on pelvic floor function.

See Advice Leaflets: -

- Pelvic Floor Muscle Exercises
- Impact of Fluids on the Bladder
- Successful Bladder Emptying
- Constipation and Laxatives

See also: -

NICE Clinical Guidance - Urinary Incontinence in Women: Management

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg171>

NICE Clinical Guidance – Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms in Men: Management

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg97>