



# Is uncontrolled urine loss holding you back?

## *Take control.*

Do you ever have times when urine accidentally leaks out? If so, you're not alone. More than 14 million Americans have urinary incontinence.

Urinary incontinence is *not* a normal part of getting older, or something you just have to accept. Many options are available to manage incontinence. Talk to your doctor about what options may be right for you.



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## Does uncontrolled urine loss bother you, and would you like to know more about how it could be treated?

If you answered 'yes,' talk to your doctor. Accidental urine loss—urinary incontinence—can be managed many ways. Your doctor can help you find ways to control incontinence without using pads or absorbent undergarments.

### Before you talk to your doctor:

1. Make a list of all the medications you are currently taking. Include:
  - prescription drugs
  - over-the-counter medicines
  - herbal products
2. Make note of any surgeries or recent illnesses you've had.
3. Record how much caffeine and fluid you drink in a typical day.
4. Record what you are doing when your urine leaks.

Keeping a bladder diary for at least three days will help keep track of fluid and urine leaks. Take the diary with you to your appointment.

### Bladder diaries can be found at:

[www.alsahealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Incontinence-Bifold.pdf](http://www.alsahealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Incontinence-Bifold.pdf)



## What causes urinary incontinence?

Many things can make urine leakage more likely:

- **for women:** childbirth
- **for men:** problems with the prostate gland, including surgery
- **for both genders:** taking certain medications, having diabetes or constipation, or drinking a lot of caffeine

## Major types of incontinence

**Stress incontinence** is loss of urine when you cough, laugh, sneeze, or do other kinds of physical activity. It is caused by weakness in the muscles that normally control urination.

**Urgency incontinence** is when you feel a strong need, or urge, to urinate and also lose urine.

**Mixed incontinence** is a combination of stress and urgency incontinence.

## Urinary incontinence can be treated three main ways:

- lifestyle changes
- behavioral treatments
- medications

### Lifestyle changes you can try include:

- reducing or avoiding caffeine
- losing some weight, if you are overweight

### Behavioral treatments

#### **Pelvic floor muscle exercises (also called Kegel exercises) for stress incontinence:**

By repeatedly squeezing the muscles that help control urination, you can make the muscles stronger and improve your ability to hold in urine.

#### **Bladder training for urgency incontinence:**

Set a schedule, then gradually increase the time between urinating by 15-30 minutes every few days. The goal is to go 3-4 hours between trips to the bathroom.

These non-drug treatments may be more effective than drugs for many patients, as well as safer and cost-free.

**For more about behavioral treatments and incontinence in general, visit:**  
[AlosaHealth.org/modules/incontinence](https://AlosaHealth.org/modules/incontinence)

### Medications

Some medications, like oxybutynin (Ditropan), can help control urgency incontinence. These drugs sometimes reduce the symptoms of incontinence, but many patients have side effects including dry mouth and constipation.

A new medication, mirabegron (Myrbetriq), can be effective for urgency incontinence. It may be an option if you are unable to tolerate the side effects of older drugs.

Men with urgency incontinence due to prostate problems may benefit from drugs called alpha-blockers, but these do not help women.

## Pads and absorbent undergarments

Containment products like pads and absorbent undergarments may help manage urine leaks. If you are using such products, speak with your doctor.

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## Patient resources:

- **Voices for PFD:** [www.voicesforpfd.org](http://www.voicesforpfd.org)
  - **National Association for Continence:** [www.nafc.org](http://www.nafc.org)
  - **Alosa Health:** [AlosaHealth.org/modules/incontinence](https://AlosaHealth.org/modules/incontinence)
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**These are general recommendations only; specific clinical decisions should be made by the treating physician based on an individual patient's clinical condition.**

[AlosaHealth.org](http://AlosaHealth.org)



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