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Urinary incontinence is a common but treatable condition that affects more than 33 million people in the United States. Today in the Holy Cross Health Blog, we're discussing the two most common types: stress incontinence and urge incontinence. Learn more about your risk factors for these conditions and how they're treated.



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Stress Incontinence vs. Urge Incontinence

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Urinary incontinence is a common but treatable condition that affects more than 33 million people in the U.S. Today in the Holy Cross Health Blog, we're discussing the two most common types: stress incontinence & urge incontinence. To learn more, visit bit.ly/2wb6DWP.



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Holy Cross Health Blog

Stress Incontinence vs. Urge Incontinence

Posted On May 20, 2019

Posted in Health Conditions (http://www.holycrosshealth.org/body.cfm?id=2201&action=list&limit_category=Health%20Conditions&ref=2), Pelvic Health (http://www.holycrosshealth.org/body.cfm?id=2201&action=list&limit_category=Pelvic%20Health&ref=2), Urinary Incontinence (http://www.holycrosshealth.org/body.cfm?id=2201&action=list&limit_category=Urinary%20Incontinence&ref=2)



Urinary incontinence, or UI, is a common bladder condition that causes accidental loss or leaking of urine. More than 33 million people in the United States suffer from some type of incontinence or bladder control problem, according to the National Association for Continence (NAFC). There are several different types of UI, but the two most common types are stress incontinence and urge incontinence. UI can have a major impact on day-to-day activities, but the good news is that it is highly treatable.

WATCH VIDEO: Kathleen Sterling, MD, Urologist, Holy Cross Germantown Hospital, discusses diagnosis and treatment for incontinence.

What is Stress Incontinence?

Stress incontinence occurs when there is urine leakage due to a physical activity or movement putting pressure on the bladder. It results when the muscles used to control and hold urine become weak or don't function properly.

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Risk factors: Stress incontinence is more prevalent in women due to the structure of the female urinary tract and life events such as pregnancy, childbirth and menopause. However, men do experience stress incontinence, particularly as they get older or if they experience prostate problems. Other risk factors include:

- Health issues such as diabetes, obesity and severe constipation
- An injury to the urethra area
- Smoking

Symptoms: The main symptom of stress incontinence is leaking urine when performing a physical activity such as:

- Sneezing
- Coughing
- Laughing
- Exercising
- Heavy lifting
- Standing from a sitting or reclining position

What is Urge Incontinence?

Urge incontinence, also referred to as overactive bladder, occurs when individuals experience a sudden need or urge to urinate but leak urine before they are able to relieve themselves in a bathroom. This results when the muscles and nerves in the bladder aren't working together properly to control urination.

Risk factors: Although anyone can experience urge incontinence, it is more common in women and older adults. Some health conditions can raise your risk for urge incontinence, including:

- Bladder inflammation
- Infections
- Diabetes
- Neurological conditions such as multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease or stroke
- Nerve injuries
- An enlarged prostate (in men)

Symptoms: The main symptoms of urge incontinence include:

- An inability to control the passing of urine
- Urinating frequently throughout the day and night
- A sudden and urgent need to urinate

Treatment for Urinary Incontinence:

Depending on the severity of your symptoms, treatment for incontinence may include:

- Bladder retraining (learning how to hold and release urine and setting a schedule to urinate)
- Pelvic muscle floor training (Kegel exercises, biofeedback and electrical stimulation)
- Lifestyle changes:
 - For stress incontinence, reducing fluid intake, quitting smoking, losing excess weight, avoiding constipation with regular fiber intake and keeping blood sugar under control if diabetic
 - For urge incontinence, drinking less than 8 ounces of a fluid at a time, avoiding fluids a few hours before bedtime, minimizing bladder irritants including beverages that include caffeine, alcohol, or carbonation
- Medication (for urge incontinence)
- Outpatient surgical procedures

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Want to Learn More?

Watch Holy Cross Germantown Hospital Urologist Kathleen Sterling, MD, discuss how urinary incontinence is diagnosed in the doctor's office, non-surgical treatment options and outpatient surgical procedures to treat this condition.

Diagnosing Incontinence and Conservative Treatment Options

Incontinence: Diagnosis and Non-Surgical Treatments



Surgical Treatment Options for Incontinence

Incontinence: Surgical Options and Their Benefits



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For people living with urinary incontinence, the pelvic health experts (<http://www.holycrosshealth.org/pelvicfloorteam>) at Holy Cross Hospital and Holy Cross Germantown Hospital are here to help (<http://www.holycrosshealth.org/pelvic-floor-surgery-irenes-story>). The team of pelvic floor specialists understands that incontinence (<http://www.holycrosshealth.org/pelvic-floor-conditions>) can be life altering, and works with each patient to diagnose their condition (<http://www.holycrosshealth.org/diagnosis-and-treatment-of-pelvic-floor-dysfunction>) and develop an evidence-based, personalized plan of care with the goal of restoring function and quality of life (<http://www.holycrosshealth.org/phyllis-is-on-the-go-after-overcoming-bladder-problems>).

For more information about urinary incontinence, the treatments available and to find a physician, visit the Urinary Incontinence section of our website (<http://www.holycrosshealth.org/urinary-incontinence>).

Holy Cross Health presents the information in this blog as a resource for our community. It is not intended to replace professional medical advice or to endorse any particular entity or service. Personal health problems should be brought to the attention of the appropriate health professionals.

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