

About Incontinence

Female Incontinence

Incontinence affects women seven to eight times more often than men.

Why so many more women?

During childbirth pushing a baby through the birth canal places all sorts of stretching pressures on most of the pelvic organs. Some women seem to be able to withstand this stretching better than others.

The damage of childbirth can be worsened by such things as long term coughing or sneezing, constipation and increased body mass. In addition, menopause, with its decreasing hormone levels can also contribute to incontinence.

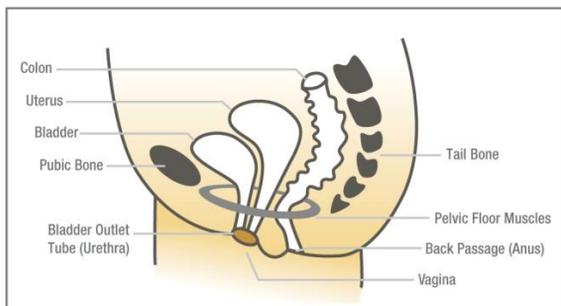
It's important to understand that incontinence is not an inevitable part of aging, nor is it necessary to accept long-term incontinence after bearing a child.

In many cases, it can be cured, and it can always be managed.

Women's Waterworks

To understand the problem, it helps to understand how your waterworks actually function.

- Kidneys filter urine from the blood and this is stored in the bladder.
- The bladder is a hollow muscular organ that holds the urine until you decide that you feel full (hopefully at about 300mls).
- When you reach the toilet, you relax your pelvic floor muscles and your brain gives permission for the bladder muscle to contract, squeezing the urine out through the urethra - the tube from the bladder to the outside.
- When the bladder muscle contracts, the muscle that holds the bladder outlet tube (urethra) shut during storage (called the sphincter), relaxes to allow the urine to pass through.
- The whole system is supported by the muscles of the pelvic pubic bone (the front bone of your pelvis).
- Many women with incontinence have weakened or damaged pelvic floor muscles, which leads to difficulty in controlling urination. Many women are able to gain back some strength in these muscles by learning and practicing Pelvic Floor Exercises.



incorrectly believe that by drinking less fluid, they will reduce their bladder control loss. In fact, urine that is more concentrated due to lack of fluid intake can irritate the bladder and cause more serious problems such as infection and dehydration. In addition, inadequate fluid intake can cause constipation, which may also make matters worse.

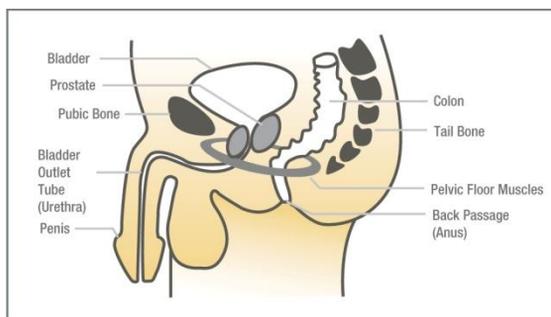
Male Incontinence

Of the estimated 2.3 million Australian and New Zealand people who have urinary incontinence, about 20% are men.

Incontinence is not an inevitable part of aging, and it is not a disease. In fact, it's a symptom or side-effect of another medical condition. Male urinary incontinence may be caused by any number of health conditions.

Prostate problems and the treatments required to correct them are the most frequent causes of urinary incontinence in men. Most men have temporary incontinence following surgery for prostate cancer.

The severity of urinary incontinence in men ranges from partial to complete loss of bladder control. They may experience varying degrees of urine loss, and the incontinence may change over time. For example, men with light incontinence may leak a little when they laugh or cough, while men with heavy incontinence may be experiencing continuous leakage. No two men are alike, and no two men are affected by incontinence the same way.



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