

Incontinence

Is the inability to control the passing of urine.

What to look for

- Inability to control urination.

The condition often reflects an underlying disorder and is usually treatable, even in the elderly. Often it was thought that it was an age-related condition and an inevitable result of getting older. It must be treated however, in order for it to improve.

Incontinence can lead to bladder or urinary tract infections if not treated or if the problem still persists. In those instances where treatment doesn't work there are pads and protection available which can aid your comfort.

Causes

Sometimes there is a continuous leaking of urine as the muscles within this area are unable to contract to hold it back and a person does not know when they need to go to the toilet. This can be the consequence of diabetes in men.

At other times, simple actions such as coughing, sneezing or exercising can cause incontinence problems. The urethra is weak and cannot resist a sudden increase in bladder pressure.

When the bladder is full in other people, it simply contracts and they have no control over the sudden urge to go to the toilet. This can occur in healthy people as well as those with other illnesses involving the central nervous system, such as [stroke](#), [Alzheimer's disease](#), [Parkinson's disease](#), and [multiple sclerosis](#).

A slipped disk, surgery or pregnancy can also contribute to this condition.

Incontinence is a potential side effect of many diuretics, sedatives, antidepressants, antihistamines, and other medications. Talk to your doctor.

Traditional Treatment

Do not worry about this ailment as in most cases it can be cured or, at the very least, greatly improved with treatment. Both conventional and alternative medicine have effective strategies for dealing with the problem. If you wish, you can try alternative methods first. However, if the condition persists or worsens, see a doctor for a full evaluation and diagnosis.

Many doctors may suggest and show you muscle strengthening exercises to help your incontinence. These treatments are safe and effective.

If your doctor decides you need medication for your condition, the drug he or she prescribes will depend on the cause of the incontinence.

Special devices called pessaries are available for women.

If none of these treatments work, your doctor may recommend surgery. Ask your doctor to describe the various options available to you and to explain any possible side effects as well.

If your incontinence cannot be cured or controlled, you can learn to manage the problem with the help of some specially designed aids that are available.

Complimentary Treatments

These treatments are aimed at strengthening the pelvic muscles to give you more support in this area.

Chinese Herbs – Chinese practitioners may make a mixture of several herbs to treat this condition. They believe herbs that help the body retain fluid are a beneficial treatment for incontinence.

Herbal Treatments – Where there is a lack of bladder control, use [corn silk](#) combined with agrimony.

Homoeopathy – *Depending on the cause of the condition, homoeopaths have numerous remedies to treat incontinence. Some that are often prescribed include: Depending on the cause of the condition, homoeopaths have numerous remedies to treat incontinence. Some that are often prescribed include:*

- For stress incontinence, particularly in the elderly, Causticum, which is said to restore vitality to aging tissue.
- For stress and urge incontinence, particularly when a person is rising from a prone position, [Pulsatilla](#), is thought to restore the urinary parts of the body to proper functioning.

There are additional remedies available.

Dietary Considerations

Maintain your ideal weight.

Avoid constipation by increasing the amount of fibre and water in your diet; eat more whole-grain foods and fruits and vegetables.

Avoid alcohol, caffeine, sugar, spicy foods, and acidic fruits and juices – all of which can irritate the bladder and trigger leaks.

Personal Care

- Avoid [constipation](#).
- Do pelvic exercises daily (see women's health).
- Retrain yourself to urinate at longer intervals
- Don't smoke.

- If you are a woman with incontinence, try crossing your legs when sneezing or coughing.

When to seek further professional advice

- You develop incontinence after an illness or after taking a new medication.
- Self-help remedies for controlling your urination are not working.