

Frequently Asked Questions:

URINARY INCONTINENCE (LOSS OF BLADDER CONTROL)

What is urinary incontinence?

Urinary incontinence is the **loss of bladder control**. It is not a disease. It is a symptom. It can range from sometimes **leaking urine** with a cough or a sneeze to having an urge to go to the bathroom that is so sudden and strong that you **don't get to the toilet in time**.

When should I tell my doctor about my loss of bladder control?

Many people think that loss of bladder control is a normal part of aging or something you just need to live with. But you do not need to handle this alone.

It may be time to talk to your doctor if your quality of life is impacted such as:

- You must do frequent clothing/bedding changes due to wetness
- You notice any redness or skin changes due to wetness
- You shy away from doing things for fear of having an “accident”
- You rely on pads/briefs to manage wetness

What are risk factors for loss of bladder control?

In general, the risk factors for loss of bladder control include gender, age, obesity, smoking, and family history. It happens twice as often in women as men.

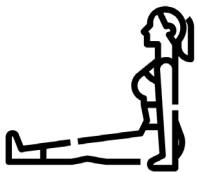
Many things can cause loss of bladder control such as:

- Hormonal changes (such as menopause)
- Childbirth (which can weaken the muscles used to control the bladder)
- History of pelvic or abdominal surgery
- Prostate surgery or other prostate conditions in men

Can loss of bladder control be treated?

In a word...YES! There are many treatments that can help. For most people, simple lifestyle changes or medical treatment can decrease or stop the symptoms.

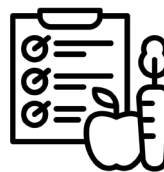
Here are some of the options to discuss with your doctor:



Special exercises, either with a physical therapist or on your own (such as Kegel exercises)



Weight control



Diet changes (limit alcohol/caffeine, chili peppers and artificial sweeteners)



Getting help to stop smoking