



Urinary incontinence: what you need to know



About leaking urine

More than 25 million people in the United States have bladder leakage. Here's what you should know about it:

- Urinary incontinence is when you can't stop your pee. It's also called urine leakage or lack of bladder control.
- Urine leakage happens for several reasons. It happens to lots of people. But it's not a normal part of getting older.
- Most people can get help.
- You may leak urine when you're active or coughing. You may also have a strong feeling that you "need to go." Or, you may notice a few drops of pee when you can't empty your bladder.
- It can happen to both men and women.
- Talk to your doctor about how you can fix it. Doctors deal with these sensitive topics all the time and are there to help you.
- Write down your bladder patterns in a diary. Note how much you drink, how often you pee, and any leaks. Share this info with your doctor.
- For more info, visit [nafc.org](https://www.nafc.org).



Why you may leak urine

Here are some reasons why you can leak urine:

- One common cause is a urinary tract infection (UTI). A UTI is an illness caused by germs in your bladder or kidneys. It's temporary but you'll want to see a doctor quickly.
- The chance of leaking urine goes up as you get older.
- Women have a higher chance of getting it if they've had a baby. Or if they've stopped having periods or they're past menopause (postmenopausal).
- Men have a higher chance of getting it if they've had prostate problems. This is the part of the body below the bladder.
- You might leak urine if the muscles in your pelvis are weak.
- You might leak urine if you smoke or are overweight.



How to stop it

Here are some things you can do:

- Think about changing what you eat. Try to cut back on drinks that have caffeine, like coffee, tea and soda.
- Limit alcohol.
- Try not to have citrus fruits or drinks (like lemons or orange juice). Also, try not to have spicy food, sugar or fake sugar (like Splenda®). They can irritate your bladder.
- Your doctor may suggest pelvic muscle exercises (Kegels) to make your muscles stronger. Physical therapy might be something else to try. It uses movement to help with pain and weakness.
- Ask your doctor about bladder retraining. This helps you change your bathroom habits by:
 - Adding time between bathroom trips
 - Helping to hold your bladder longer
 - Taking care of urges to pee
- Keep a healthy weight and quit smoking.
- Talk to your doctor about medicines or other therapies.

Sources

- National Association for Continence. Incontinence education and support for patients, caregivers, and professionals. nafc.org. Accessed March 8, 2023.
- Urology Care Foundation. UrologyHealth.org. Accessed March 8, 2023.



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