

I Sprung a Leak

Do I have Urinary Incontinence?

Urinary Incontinence (UI) is very common. It becomes more common with age but can affect young women too. 75% of women will experience some pelvic floor issue during their lives.

What is UI?

UI is involuntary leakage that can present as a few drops of urine, a sudden urge or a stream of urine that is passed without your control. This can occur while walking, sitting, during physical activity, sneezing or laughing and even during sexual activity.

What causes UI?

Your pelvic floor is made of many muscles that act like a hammock to support your internal pelvic structures (bladder, uterus, vagina, intestines, rectum). Pelvic muscles can stretch or weaken like any muscle in our bodies. When this happens the bladder is less supported, causing urine to pass. UI often results from:

- pregnancy
- childbirth
- changes in hormones during menopause
- chronic constipation
- injury
- being overweight or obese
- medications
- certain medical conditions like diabetes or stroke

There are three main types of UI:

1. Urge Incontinence (Overactive Bladder or OAB) – leaking following a strong, sudden urge to urinate
2. Stress Incontinence – leaking with coughing, sneezing, laughing, exercising or activities that put pressure on the bladder
3. Mixed Incontinence – two or more types of incontinence together

What Can Be Done to Fix the Leak?

There are many options available- surgery is almost always the last option!

- Muscle strengthening techniques
- Strengthening and support tools (vaginal weights, pessaries)
- Bladder retraining
- Biofeedback – techniques for muscle control for certain types of UI
- Dietary changes
- Medications for bladder control
- Neuromodulation – nerve stimulation of the nerves that control the bladder
- Surgery

Questions to Ask Your Health Care Professional about UI

1. Should I use a bladder diary?
2. Are there changes that I can make in my daily routine that would help?
3. Are there consequences from waiting to get treatment?
4. How successful are the treatment options?
5. How long will it take before I notice improvement once I start treatment?

Call the Upstate Women's Health nurse line at 315-464-2756 for more information or to make an appointment

