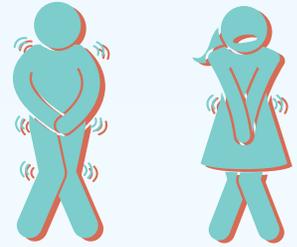


# UNDERSTANDING URINARY INCONTINENCE



## What is urinary incontinence?

Urinary incontinence happens when you lose control of your bladder. In some cases, you may empty your bladder's contents completely. In other cases, you may experience only minor leakage. The condition may be temporary or chronic, depending on its cause.

According to the Urology Care Foundation, millions of adults in the United States experience urinary incontinence. Urinary incontinence affects women more often than men in a 2-to-1 Trusted Source ratio. However, this condition can affect anyone and has many different causes.

As you age, the muscles supporting your bladder tend to weaken, which can lead to urinary incontinence. Many different health problems can also cause the condition. Symptoms can range from mild to severe and can be a sign of cancer, kidney stones, infection, or an enlarged prostate, among other causes.

## Types of urinary incontinence:

Urinary incontinence is divided into three general types. You can potentially experience more than one type at the same time.



### Stress Incontinence

Stress incontinence is triggered by certain types of physical activity. For example, you might lose control of your bladder when you're exercising, coughing, sneezing or laughing. Such activities put stress on the sphincter muscle that holds urine in your bladder. The added stress can cause the muscle to release urine.



### Urge Incontinence

Urge incontinence occurs when you lose control of your bladder after experiencing a sudden and strong urge to urinate. Once that urge hits, you may not be able to make it to the bathroom in time.



### Overflow Incontinence

Overflow incontinence can occur if you don't completely empty your bladder when you urinate. Later, some of the remaining urine may leak from your bladder. This type is sometimes called "dribbling."



### Functional Incontinence

Unlike other types of incontinence, functional incontinence is caused by physical or mental barriers that may prevent someone from making it to the bathroom in time. This can be due to cognitive issues, such as dementia or Alzheimer's disease, muscular issues like arthritis, or neurological issues like stroke or spinal cord damage.

## Causes and risk factors of urinary incontinence:

There are many potential causes and risk factors for urinary incontinence.

Some risk factors can include:

- Having weakened bladder muscles, which can result from aging.
- Having physical damage to your pelvic floor muscles, such as from childbirth.
- Having an enlarged prostate or having prostate or bladder cancer, which can put pressure on your bladder.
- Having a neurological condition such as dementia, Alzheimer's, or a physical condition that may prevent you from making it to the bathroom on time.
- Having an infection, such as a urinary tract infection, bladder infection, kidney infection, or kidney stone.
- Being pregnant or going through menopause.
- Being overweight or having diabetes.

Some causes of urinary incontinence are temporary and easily treated, while others are more serious and ongoing. If you experience incontinence, schedule an appointment with a healthcare professional.

It can disrupt daily life, lead to accidents, and may signal an underlying medical condition that can often be treated.

### Sources:

<https://www.healthline.com/health/urinary-incontinence>  
<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/17596-urinary-incontinence>