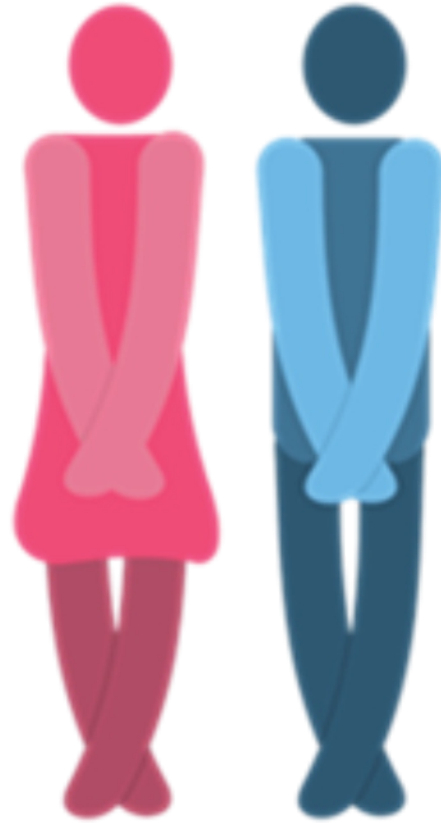


Urinary Incontinence in the Elderly

Information for Patients/Caregivers



What is Urinary Incontinence?

It is the unintentional or involuntary passing/leakage of urine due to loss of bladder control. There are various types of urinary incontinence:

- **Stress incontinence:** Leaking that happens while coughing or sneezing
- **Urge incontinence:** Leaking that happens before reaching the toilet after a sudden intense urge to pass urine
- **Overflow incontinence:** Leaking that happens when the bladder fails to empty

Who is at Risk?

Gender: Women are more likely to develop urinary incontinence as they age due to repeated pregnancies, childbirth, and menopause. Men can also develop it, usually due to prostate problems.

Age: As one gets older, the muscles of the bladder and the urethra get weak, and the bladder is unable to store a large amount of urine.

Medical conditions: Certain diseases and conditions like infection, constipation, diabetes, stroke, spinal injuries, etc., can cause incontinence.

Why Treat It?

It can be embarrassing and can have a huge impact on your life by negatively affecting your personal relationships as well as causing anxiety, depression, etc. It can lead you to restrict your social activity, impacting your ability to interact with the people around you.

Apart from the social and mental impact, there are physical consequences of urinary incontinence as well:

- It can increase the risk of falls and fractures
- It can cause skin problems like rashes and sores that result from constant wetting
- It increases the risk of developing repeated urinary tract infections

It is important to see a doctor since a thorough check-up can help determine the cause and type of incontinence. The doctor can do some tests to pick up any diseases that may be responsible for it and can suggest medications and exercises that can help you control incontinence.

How to Prevent It?


- Maintain a healthy weight
- Avoid caffeine, carbonated drinks, alcohol, smoking, acidic foods such as spicy, oily food, and citrus fruits that irritate the bladder
- Eat more fiber to prevent constipation
- Consider physical therapy; exercise pelvic muscles as explained by a doctor (refer to the Kegel Exercise brochure)

Some Tips for Staying Dry:

- Use urinals and bed pans at the bedside for patients with restricted mobility
- Use sheets/pads/diapers for cognitively impaired patients (people with dementia, Alzheimer's Disease, etc.) or bed-bound patients.

The Aga Khan University Hospital

 (021) 111-911-911

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