

Questions to Ask Your Doctor about Incontinence

<http://www.urologychannel.com/patient-information-incontinence/index.shtml>

Urinary incontinence is a very common condition, especially in women. There are several different **types of urinary incontinence**. The most common types are stress incontinence, urge incontinence, mixed incontinence, and overflow incontinence.

Involuntary urine loss may result from an acute medical condition (e.g., urinary tract infection [UTI]), a chronic condition (e.g., multiple sclerosis [MS]), or a physical abnormality (e.g., bladder or pelvic floor muscle weakness, urinary blockage, benign prostatic hyperplasia [BPH]). Although urinary incontinence is more common in people who are middle-aged or older, the condition is not a normal part of aging.

People who experience incontinence should speak with a urologist or other qualified health care provider. Here are some questions to ask your doctor about urinary incontinence. **Print this page**, check off the questions you would like answered, and take it with you to your appointment. Asking the right questions can help you improve communication with your doctor, learn to manage your condition better, and develop a more successful treatment plan.

Questions to Ask Your Doctor about Urinary Incontinence

- What type or types of urinary incontinence do you suspect I have?
- Might my incontinence be associated with genetic factors (heredity), lifestyle, medications, pregnancy, childbirth, menopause, or another medical condition?
- If my incontinence is related to an underlying medical condition, will treatment for this condition improve my symptoms?
- Are there any complications commonly associated with this type of urinary incontinence? What should I do if I experience any of these complications?
Telephone number to call:
- What types of diagnostic tests will be performed to help determine the type and severity of my incontinence?
- Should I keep a voiding diary and/or complete an incontinence questionnaire?
- What information from my personal or family medical history may be useful to help diagnose my condition?
- How should I prepare for diagnostic tests, such as laboratory tests, imaging tests, urodynamic testing, and cystoscopy?

- Without treatment, would you expect my symptoms to gradually improve, remain about the same, or continue to worsen?
- What steps (e.g., diet and lifestyle changes) can I take to help manage my condition? How can I reduce my risk for rashes, odors, and other conditions associated with urinary incontinence?
- Do you recommend Kegel exercises? If so, how do I perform these exercises correctly?
- What treatment do you recommend for my urinary incontinence?
- Why do you recommend this treatment?
- What can I expect before, during, and after treatment?
- If this treatment is unsuccessful, what other options are available?
- What are the potential side effects of incontinence medications? What should I do if I experience severe side effects? **Telephone number to call:**
- Might my treatment involve biofeedback, bladder training with timed voiding, external or internal devices, injectables, neuromuscular electrical stimulation, or physical therapy? If so, what do these treatments involve?
- Do you recommend naturopathic treatments, such as dietary supplements, herbal medicine, or homeopathy, to treat urinary incontinence?
- If my incontinence is related to menopause, might hormone replacement therapy (HRT) be helpful?
- Might I require intermittent self-catheterization to treat my urinary incontinence? If so, what does this treatment involve?
- Might I need surgery to treat my condition? If so, what type of surgery?
- Why do you recommend this surgical procedure?
- How do I prepare for the procedure?

- What can I expect following this surgery?
- How will my pain be managed after incontinence surgery?
- What complications may be associated with this surgery? Who should I contact if I experience complications? **Telephone number to call:**
- When can I return to normal activities following the procedure?
- How long will the results of this surgery last?
- If I continue to experience urinary incontinence, what other options for treatment are available?

Notes/Additional Information