

Over 25 Ways to Treat Incontinence Symptoms

A Publication of

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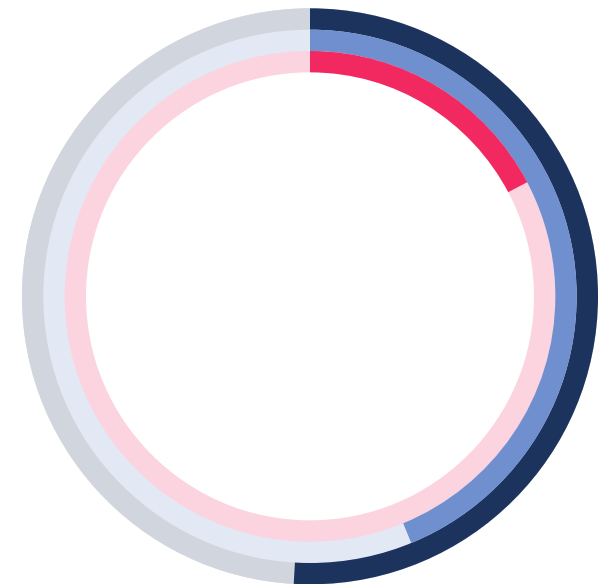
Introduction

Incontinence, as common as it is among Americans and around the world, is still a complex condition. According to the Center for Disease Control, over half of seniors (over the age of 65) in the United States are diagnosed with some form of incontinence. Of the Americans who are diagnosed in the study, **50.9%** of them reported both urinary and fecal incontinence. **43.8%** reported urinary incontinence alone, and **17.3%** reported fecal incontinence alone.

These numbers are astounding, and what makes them more concerning is the fact that the complications associated with incontinence are not limited to the eliminative functions. Often, there is a much more severe illness at work, of which incontinence is merely a symptom. These illnesses include diabetes, stroke, multiple sclerosis, dementia, Alzheimer's disease, prostate cancer, bladder cancer, and more. This isn't to mention any of the emotional problems that may arise due to incontinence symptoms, physical discomfort, and an interruption to the process of one's life – all leading to a decrease in the quality of living for an individual.

This guide is designed to help you manage your incontinence symptoms regardless of what they are and help you to live the life you deserve. Incontinence shouldn't take away your livelihood, and with this book, it doesn't have to. Here, you'll learn over 25 different ways to deal with your symptoms. First, let's understand what incontinence is, and its various forms.

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Urinary & Fecal Incontinence

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Urinary Incontinence

17.3%

Fecal Incontinence

The Different Forms of Incontinence



Believe it or not, incontinence is not just one thing. In fact, there are multiple forms of which you should be aware. All kinds of persistent urinary incontinence involve recurring episodes of involuntary leakage, but still, there are different types. It is not always obvious which one you may have, but your doctor can help you determine which one you have by talking to you about your symptoms and through the diagnosis process. The different forms are:

STRESS OR EFFORT INCONTINENCE

Involves leakage with a cough or sneeze. This is because of a weakened muscle in the bladder called the sphincter. It can happen in women who have gone through pregnancy, childbirth, or menopause, and men can get it after their prostates have been removed.

OVERFLOW INCONTINENCE

Involves the continual leakage of urine. Prostate gland conditions, a blocked urethra, and nerve damage (such as from uncontrolled diabetes, multiple sclerosis, or an injury to the spinal cord) can all cause Overflow Incontinence.

URGE INCONTINENCE

Involves a sudden feeling that you need to go. Overactive bladder is a type of Urge Incontinence, and it is triggered by bladder spasms. Your risk is higher after pregnancy or if you are overweight.

FECAL OR DOUBLE INCONTINENCE

Involves the involuntary release of feces or feces and urine simultaneously. Common causes of Fecal Incontinence include muscle problems, nerve damage, and certain illnesses.

MIXED INCONTINENCE

Involves a variety of specific symptoms resulting from weaker bladder muscles. It is more common in older women and can often be treated with lifestyle therapy.

You can also experience temporary Urinary Incontinence, which can happen if you drink too much caffeinated coffee or tea, over-hydrate, drink alcohol, or take certain medications.



Managing Your Incontinence



Now that you understand more about the different forms of incontinence and their symptoms, we're going to explore a number of different ways to manage your symptoms so that you may live a more rich and fulfilling life.

Eating

The first, and possibly one of the simplest ways to positively impact your incontinence symptoms is to change the foods that you eat. Spicy foods actually have a negative impact on incontinence symptoms, as they can irritate the lining of the bladder, worsening urges and making it harder to "hold it." If you are plagued by incontinence, eliminating or reducing spicy foods can cause a significant change.

Citrus fruits are one of the biggest culprits, but anything with high

acidity levels can irritate your bladder and make incontinence worse. Antioxidants like cranberries are often recommended for bladder infections, but if you are someone who has incontinence, they can intensify the symptoms. The same is true of tomato-based products.

Finally, if you can reduce constipation, you will often see a reduction in incontinence as well. Eating a varied diet with plenty of fiber can help in this department.

Foods to avoid to improve incontinence symptoms:



Spicy Foods



Highly Acidic Foods



Antioxidants Like Cranberries



Tomato-Based Products



It is important to look at an incontinence eating plan as a work in progress. Trial and error is the best way to figure out how certain things affect your body.

Doctors often advise those who suffer from urinary incontinence to avoid eating certain things, but most doctors realize that the triggers for one patient may not be the same for another. It is

important to look at an incontinence eating plan as a work in progress. Trial and error is the best way to figure out how certain things affect your body. While you probably want to talk to your

doctor before making any major dietary changes, consider these tips for eating better to control incontinence.

Drinking

Like eating, drinking certain beverages can have an effect on your incontinence.

Alcohol has an effect on both the bladder itself (as it acts as a diuretic) and the nervous system, reducing control over your bladder. Some people might consider eliminating it altogether, while others may be able to handle small quantities.

Another wise choice is to reduce or eliminate caffeine as much as you can. Caffeine, in the form of coffee, tea, or soda, has a triple effect on your incontinence. Not only is caffeine a diuretic, but it also stimulates the bladder and encourages you to drink more liquids than you may have drunk otherwise. Eliminating or reducing these drinks from your diet can make a big difference in your symptoms, especially for women.

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It is said that women who consume more than four cups of caffeine daily are the ones who will suffer from incontinence or an overactive bladder the most. If you find you are drinking a lot of coffee and having to frequently urinate, it might be time to change your caffeine habits.

Acting as a diuretic, caffeine can also cause contractions of the muscles associated with the bladder, leading to unexpected urinary leaks. If you consume caffeine quickly, you should also be warned that your habit could cause permanent damage to the bladder muscle, leading to incontinence issues that could be harder to address later on.

Whether you're a caffeine addict or not, if you find yourself running into incontinence problems, don't worry – [MyPelvicHealth.co.uk](https://www.mypelvichealth.co.uk) can help with specially designed [incontinence briefs for men](#) and [incontinence panties for women](#), providing protection while being as inconspicuous as possible. Each garment lasts up to 250 washes or more, so you get great quality products for minimal investment.

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Retrain Your Bladder

It is possible to retrain your bladder in order to increase the amount of time between using the bathroom to empty your bladder. Some people who battle with incontinence have found that retraining their bladder is helpful, but it is important to recognize that it is a lengthy process that is highly dependent on several individual factors:

RESIST THE URGE

To start, resist the urge to empty your bladder. This is the first step in teaching your brain that you do not need to go to the bathroom every time you get the urge. If you give in to the urge every time, your symptoms will tend to get worse over time. Remember, start slowly and don't let it get too painful.

KEEP A DIARY

Learn when exactly you need to go to the bathroom by keeping a diary. Keep a notebook in your bathroom or start a file on your smart phone. Keep track of when you drink liquids and then write down every trip to the bathroom. This will help you get a visualization of your bathroom habits.

SET YOUR GOALS

After you have analyzed your diary, set your goals. The key is to start small. If you go to the bathroom every 30 minutes, you won't want to push yourself to go two hours in between bathroom trips. Instead, the [Interstitial Cystitis Association](#) recommends you try to go 45 minutes between bathroom breaks for at least a month. At that point, you can increase the amount of time you push yourself in between trips to the bathroom.

BE PATIENT

Be patient and recognize that this can be a lengthy process — it's a marathon, not a sprint. Depending on the strength of your bladder and the severity of your incontinence issues, this process can take several weeks, or it can take several months. It is an exercise in patience, but many people feel that it is well worth it in the long run.



Retraining your bladder can provide the results you have been waiting for, but it is important to realize that there is no such thing as overnight success when it comes to these types of programs. You will want to work with your health care provider to come up with a plan of action that is right for you and your individual situation. On average, it can take up to three months to retrain your bladder in order

to increase the amount of time in between bathroom breaks. You may have setbacks along the way, but it is important to focus on the successes that you have had. A positive attitude and perseverance will help you get through this process. In the meantime, you always have your [incontinence panties](#) or [incontinence briefs](#) to keep you comfortable and dry.

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Kegel Exercises

Another thing you can do to remedy incontinence issues is to practice Kegel, or pelvic floor, exercises. These are especially helpful in treating Stress and Urge Incontinence.

Pregnant women most commonly practice [Kegel exercises](#) as a way to build midsection muscles to better prepare for childbirth, but men may also practice them to strengthen pelvic muscles to help kick their own incontinence issues. Here's a look at how to locate the pelvic muscles. Later, we'll talk about how to do more advanced versions of these exercises:

IDENTIFY YOUR PELVIC MUSCLES

Before you can do advanced Kegel exercises, you need to be able to do the basic ones. Part of doing these basic ones is first locating the muscles that control urination. The best way to identify these muscles is to begin urinating and then stop the urine stream. Hold this for five seconds. The muscles that clench are the ones you need to be working on developing and strengthening.

PRACTICE AND FAMILIARIZE

After identifying your pelvic muscles, sit on the floor and work on holding them at five-second intervals. Become more familiar with which muscles you want to strengthen. Such exercises can literally be practiced anywhere: in the car, in your office, at home watching TV, etc. After this step you can move on to more advanced Kegel exercises.

DEEP FLEX

The deep flex is more advanced than simply working out the pelvic muscles in five-second intervals. The deep flex does involve doing this, but doing it with more intensity. For instance, it involves clenching the pelvic muscles for five-second intervals while gradually trying to work your way up to 10-second intervals. This exercise will strengthen the muscles more quickly.



Men and women have different genitalia, so it only makes sense that more advanced Kegel exercises are done differently for each sex. Here's a look at how they can be done:

Advanced Kegel Exercises

FOR MEN

Strengthening the pelvic muscles often involves doing so with an erection. After this is achieved, men can strengthen the pelvic muscles by flexing them to move the penis up and down. After strengthening the muscles, men can add extra weight to this exercise by placing a damp cloth over the penis. In addition to strengthening the pelvic muscles to remedy urinary incontinence, these exercises can also, in many cases, lead to a more satisfying sex life for men.

FOR WOMEN

One advanced Kegel exercise for women involves inserting a weighted cone into the vagina. Similar to the routine pelvic exercise noted above, women then contract the pelvic muscles, except it's done in a way to prevent the cone from falling out or becoming displaced. Women can also purchase a set of cones that vary in weight, so as their muscles get stronger, they can gradually upgrade to heavier cones that will continue to work out the pelvic muscles that control urination.

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Yoga

Yoga can help you manage and improve your symptoms with its combination of pelvic floor-strengthening poses and relaxation aspects. Similar to Kegel exercises, many yoga poses help you gain strength in your pelvic floor muscles, which can help incontinence symptoms. Yoga can actually strengthen more muscles within the pelvic floor than Kegel exercises can. Relaxing the pelvic floor is necessary along with strengthening it, and yoga poses can provide both components.

Try these yoga exercises to strengthen and relax the pelvic floor muscles:

SEATED LIFTING

Sit in a cross-legged position on the floor. Breathe deeply from your belly, and as you inhale, notice your pelvic muscles moving toward the ground; as you exhale, notice them moving up. Focus on extending the relaxation of the muscles as you inhale and the lifting and strengthening as you exhale.



CAT-COW POSE

Go into a hands-and-knees position on your yoga mat. As you inhale, extend your spine as you lift your head, chest and, tailbone. As you exhale, bring your head down and arch your back. Move back and forth between the movements along with your breathing.



GARLAND POSE

Squat on your yoga mat with your feet and knees just outside your hips. Bring your torso between your thighs and your elbows inside your knees with your palms together. Stay in this position up to a minute. Put a folded mat or blanket under your heels if you are unable to bring them down to the floor.



ADDITIONAL POSES

Many additional yoga poses can strengthen or relax the pelvic floor. The exercise can help in general because a lot of the poses strengthen the core muscles and, in turn, engage the pelvic muscles. For more poses that target the pelvic floor to relax or strengthen it, try [Legs-up-the-Wall pose](#), [Reclining Big Toe pose](#), [Reclining Bound Angle pose](#), [Two-Footed pose](#), and [Corpse pose](#).

Yoga is a natural treatment method that can improve pelvic floor muscles and control symptoms of incontinence.

In addition to the poses in yoga, this practice can help you relax your body and pay attention to it (known as relaxation and awareness techniques).

The [University of Maryland Medical Center](#) explains that relaxation techniques can help you extend the time between your trips to the bathroom. A yoga class that includes a meditation or deep breathing component, such as Hatha yoga, will provide relaxation. Slow and gentle yoga classes can also provide relaxation during the poses component of the class.

Yoga also facilitates an awareness of the mind and body, which can help you learn the signs of incontinence and work on retraining your bladder. It can also help to counteract stress and deal with emotional concerns that can be related to incontinence.

Yoga is a natural treatment method that can improve pelvic floor muscles and control symptoms of incontinence. Try these yoga poses and other techniques to see if they help you strengthen and relax your pelvic floor to improve your symptoms.



Herbal Remedies

The herb St. John's wort is used for incontinence, according to the University of Maryland Medical Center. You could take this in a number of forms, including:

- Herbal tea
- Capsules
- Powders
- Glycerine or alcohol extracts

As a warning, this herb has been known to affect numerous medications, can affect your mood, and should not be taken during pregnancy, so it's best to talk to your doctor before taking it.

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Acupuncture

Acupuncture practitioners see incontinence as an imbalance within the body. To fix this, the practitioner will insert acupuncture needles into certain areas of the body that coincide with the condition, including the kidneys, liver, bladder, and other organs.

The idea is that acupuncture helps energy flow throughout the body and balances the different parts of the body. Your acupuncturist might also give you Chinese herbs to go along with the acupuncture sessions, which goes along with our previous treatment method.



Some Traditional Chinese Herbs:



Ginseng Roots



Chinese Pearl Barley



Dried Jujube Fruits



Dried Lily Bulbs



Pumpkin Seeds



Lotus Seeds

Smoking and Incontinence

It's no secret that smoking is associated with a variety of health issues, such as an increased risk of lung cancer, heart disease, and high blood pressure. But what many people don't realize is that smoking impacts other areas of the body aside from the heart and lungs. Yes, smoking can also have an impact on your bladder, as it's estimated that smokers are three times more likely to experience incontinence than non-smokers.

The type of incontinence that is most commonly associated with cigarette smoking is Stress Incontinence. That's because smokers, over time, are likely to develop a chronic cough – and every time smokers cough, they're potentially putting pressure on the bladder muscles and weakening or damaging them. If the bladder muscles aren't strong enough, and the person has a full bladder, something's going to give. Hence, that's where urine leakage commonly occurs.

Aside from putting pressure on the bladder, smoking is also a known bladder irritant, which can cause more frequent and urgent urination. And perhaps most alarmingly, Urge Incontinence and frequent urination can be signs of bladder cancer, which is common among smokers.

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Obviously, the best way for smokers to kick Stress Incontinence is by quitting smoking. Ex-smokers who experienced Urinary Incontinence will likely see their symptoms clear up as soon as their chronic cough clears up, as well as see signs of frequent and urgent urination dwindle. However, stopping smoking is much easier said than done. Here's a look at some alternatives and some suggestions to stopping smoking altogether:

TRY E-CIGS

Electronic cigarettes, or e-cigs, contain nicotine, but are absent of the tobacco that is found in traditional cigarettes, which often leads to chronic coughing and other side effects.

PELVIC MUSCLES

Strengthening the pelvic muscles with regular pelvic floor exercises can help build up strength in your body's core, thereby reducing the chance of involuntary urination. "Training" the bladder as a means of strengthening the muscles can also help in minimizing incontinence symptoms.

OTHER PRODUCTS

There are a variety of other products that can help someone manage incontinence, from [incontinence briefs](#) and [incontinence bed pads](#), to prescribed medication that can help alleviate symptoms.

As you can see, smoking and incontinence are directly related. What's more is that incontinence symptoms in smokers can worsen over time, as chronic coughing gets worse, if the proper fixes or steps aren't taken.



Reducing Incontinence Odor

Whether you decide to wear disposable undergarments, or weaver [briefs](#) and [panties](#) made with odor eliminating antimicrobial fibers and sewn-in absorbent pads, you may still experience an odor when removing your undergarments or performing daily activities. Here are several tips to help with incontinence odors:

ENSURE INCONTINENCE PANTIES OR INCONTINENCE BRIEFS FIT RIGHT

While the briefs and panties are perfect for catching, holding, and cutting down on odors, they can't work right if they don't fit you. You want to have a snug fit without shifting so that the urine does not escape and stain your clothing.

DRINK A LOT OF FLUIDS

It feels easy and natural to cut back on fluids when you have incontinence. Basically, you are telling yourself, "If I drink less, there will be less chances of leaking." However, this is a bad idea. When you drink less, the urine becomes more concentrated and produces a stronger smell. If you can, drink about 6–8 glasses of water a day, but know that moderation is key! You can also switch to drinking cranberry juice, which naturally reduces odor.

TAKE VITAMIN C

Vitamin C is a great way to reduce the odor in your urine. Always speak with your doctor about taking this vitamin so you don't have any complications with any other medications you may be taking.

REVIEW YOUR DIET

Some types of food and drink have a hand in creating a strong odor to your urine. In particular, coffee and asparagus seem to be common culprits for many people. Also, certain medications may change the urine

odor. Review your diet to determine what foods are causing problems. Speak with your doctor about the medication so he can give you the best advice.

KEEP CLEAN

Good hygiene can control the odors and allow you to feel fresh and dry. Avoid powders that don't do much except make your briefs and panties soggy. Use gentle cleansers and moisturizers after washing. When changing pads or undergarments, clean yourself thoroughly to eliminate odors.

TACKLE URINE STAINS QUICKLY

Don't let the stain sit in clothing, bedding, or upholstery. Clean the stain immediately to get rid of the odor. When washing clothes, place baking soda or white vinegar into the wash water as a laundry detergent booster. If you decide to use white vinegar, set your washer to an extra rinse or two to fully wash out the vinegar. If the odor is in cushions or mattresses, follow the manufacturer's instructions on spot cleaning the area.



In Closing

With this guide to managing your incontinence symptoms, you'll be prepared to deal with your condition no matter what circumstances you face. Of course, this is not to be taken as medical advice, and if you have any clinical questions regarding your incontinence, please contact a doctor or primary care physician. A licensed medical doctor will be able to provide you with expert advice about your condition in the event that you experience worsening symptoms.

As always, be sure to visit our [incontinence resource center](#) for more information about incontinence and treating your symptoms. We post consistent updates to [our blog](#) about incontinence treatment methods, recipes, and more, and our resources page has information for [incontinence caregivers](#), [women with incontinence](#), and [men with incontinence](#). Finally, our online store has the best options when it comes to [incontinence briefs](#) and [incontinence panties](#), so be sure to visit and get your pair now!

Incontinence doesn't have to take away your livelihood. We are here with you throughout your entire journey to wellness. Start living the life you deserve!





MyPelvicHealth.co.uk

