



Center for Incontinence and Female Pelvic Medicine

Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation

The ability to control urination is one of those things we take for granted, until we lose it. People suffering from incontinence (loss of bladder control) must often restrict normal daily activities. They are faced with potentially embarrassing situations, including the shame of being a burden to their families or other caregivers. And the problem is not uncommon. The Continence and Pelvic Floor Dysfunction Program will include:

- Evaluation of fluid intake and urinating habits
- Guidelines to reduce bladder irritability
- Techniques in bladder training and special pelvic muscle exercises
- Pelvic floor muscle retraining

Incontinence can occur for many reasons - infection or injury, loss of muscle control due to aging and/or childbirth, nervous system disorders or neuromuscular disease. In all cases, the urinary incontinence is a symptom of some other disorder - it is not a disease itself. Consider these statistics:

- 10-20 million Americans of all ages suffer from some form of urinary incontinence
- An estimated 20 percent of women over 55 have stress incontinence, in which leakage occurs following stressful activities such as sneezing or lifting heavy objects
- Incontinence is the second leading cause for nursing homes
- Up to 25% of sanitary napkins used are for incontinence

The good news is that recent advancements in treatment procedures offer help for the vast majority of incontinence patients. It is estimated that more than 70% of incontinence sufferers can regain control and that practically all others can be helped with treatment procedures available today.

Did You Know?

I've heard that Physical Therapy can help with the problem of incontinence. How does it help?

Physical Therapists who specialize in incontinence treat the pelvic muscles just as they would any other muscle of the body. The pelvic muscles are evaluated for strength, coordination, and tone. The patient is taught exercises for strengthening, relaxation, body mechanics, techniques to decrease urge, and bladder irritants to avoid. Patients are usually seen once a week for four to six weeks. Incontinence can occur in males as well as females.