

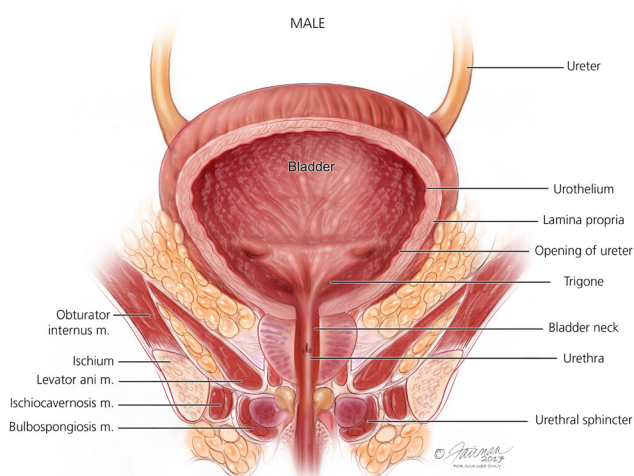
Stress Urinary Incontinence What You Should Know

Urology Care
FOUNDATION™
The Official Foundation of the
American Urological Association

WHAT IS STRESS URINARY INCONTINENCE (SUI)?

Stress Urinary Incontinence, or SUI, is when urine leaks out. It's caused by sudden pressure on the bladder and urethra. The pressure causes the sphincter muscles to open briefly which accidentally allows urine to leak. With mild SUI, pressure may be from sudden forceful activities, like exercise, sneezing, laughing or coughing. More severe SUI is when you leak while doing less forceful activities, such as standing up, walking or bending over. Urinary "accidents" like this can be a few drops of urine or enough to soak through your clothes.

MALE BLADDER MUSCLES



TYPES OF INCONTINENCE

Urinary incontinence is a problem with the loss of control over urination. There are two main types:

- **Stress Urinary Incontinence (SUI):**

A small to moderate amount of urine is released, without control. This happens when you cough, sneeze or laugh.

- **Urge Urinary Incontinence (UUI) or Overactive Bladder (OAB):**

There is a sudden, uncontrollable need to urinate. Leaks may be moderate to large.

WHAT CAUSES SUI?

The most common risk factors for SUI are:

- Gender: females are more likely to get SUI
- Pregnancy and childbirth
- Nerve injuries to the lower back
- Pelvic or prostate surgery
- Smoking (which leads to chronic coughing)
- Chronic coughing
- Being overweight

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Stress Urinary Incontinence

What You Should Know

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF SUI?

The main symptom of SUI is when urine leaks out during any activity that puts pressure on your abdomen. These leaking “accidents” can be a few drops to enough to soak through clothes. With mild SUI, pressure comes from exercise, sneezing, laughing or coughing. If your SUI is more severe, you may also leak with standing up, walking or bending over.

HOW IS SUI TREATED?

Lifestyle Changes and Products: Making a few changes in your everyday life can help your SUI symptoms. You can lose weight, stop smoking (to help you cough less) and maintain good overall health. Exercises, bladder training to schedule bathroom visits, and SUI products may also help.

- **Pelvic Floor Muscle Exercises (Kegels):** Daily Kegels are proven to strengthen your pelvic floor. This helps support the bladder and other organs. It’s important to do Kegels correctly and often.
- **Absorbent Products:** As a quick-fix or long-term option, absorbent pads are available if leaks are not a major problem in your life. They come in many shapes and forms. They can be pads or pull-on briefs.
- **Medical Devices:** For women with weak pelvic floor muscles, a device may be used to manage symptoms. It can be prescription or bought over-the-counter, and fitted by your healthcare provider. For men, you may be given a penile clamp/clip to stop leaks. These external clamps are used to limit the flow of urine from the penis.

Drugs: There are currently no drugs approved in the U.S. to treat SUI. If you have both SUI and OAB, your healthcare provider may tell you to take OAB drugs or treatments. The drugs do not treat SUI, just OAB symptoms.

Surgical Treatment: If surgery is needed, there are many options. Learn the risks and benefits of each choice. Also talk to your doctor about what to expect during and after surgery before you decide. Aim to work with a urologist with experience in SUI surgery. Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgeons (FPMRS) are certified in SUI and other pelvic surgery.

- **Urethral Injections/ Bulking Agents:** Urethral injections are used to “bulk up” the urethra. This is a treatment for women. “Bulking agents” are put into the urethra and bladder sphincter to improve the way the sphincter closes the bladder. This treatment may not have long lasting results, and may need to be repeated over time.
- **Slings:** Slings can be used for both women and men. But “sling” surgery is the most common surgery in women. For women, a small strip of material (a sling) is placed under your urethra to stop it from moving downward during activities. It acts as a hammock to support the urethra and the neck of the bladder. There are two different types of sling surgeries for women. The first is the midurethral sling, which is the most common. The second type is the traditional sling (autologous). In men, sling surgery is used to treat those with mild SUI. Sling surgery is not as helpful for men who have had radiation to the prostate or urethra. It is also not a good choice for men with severe incontinence.
- **Bladder Neck Suspension:** Also called Retropubic Suspension, Colposuspension, or Burch Suspension. This is not as common as sling surgery. In this surgery, sutures are placed in the tissue along the bladder neck and urethra. The sutures support the urethra and sphincter muscles. This stops them from moving downward and opening by accident.
- **Artificial Sphincter:** A treatment specifically for men. It is a good way for a man to treat his SUI. This surgery places a device with three parts into your body. The device helps close the urethra to stop leaks.

CAN I PREVENT SUI?

One of the best ways to prevent SUI is to do daily Kegel exercises. These exercises keep your pelvic muscles strong. Maintaining a healthy weight with a diet rich in fiber and water (low on alcohol and soda) also helps. Consider how much fluid you drink and make plans to urinate regularly. If you’ve had surgery, protect yourself from problems by avoiding weight gain and activities that strain your belly and pelvis.

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ABOUT THE UROLOGY CARE FOUNDATION

The Urology Care Foundation is the world's leading urologic foundation – and the official foundation of the American Urological Association. We provide information for those actively managing their urologic health and those ready to make health changes. Our information is based on the American Urological Association resources and is reviewed by medical experts.

To learn more, visit the Urology Care Foundation's website, **UrologyHealth.org/UrologicConditions** or to go **UrologyHealth.org/FindAUrologist** to find a doctor near you.

DISCLAIMER

This information is not a tool for self-diagnosis or a substitute for professional medical advice. It is not to be used or relied on for that purpose. Please talk to your urologist or health care provider about your health concerns. Always consult a health care provider before you start or stop any treatments, including medications.

For copies of other printed material and other urologic conditions, visit **UrologyHealth.org/Order**.

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