

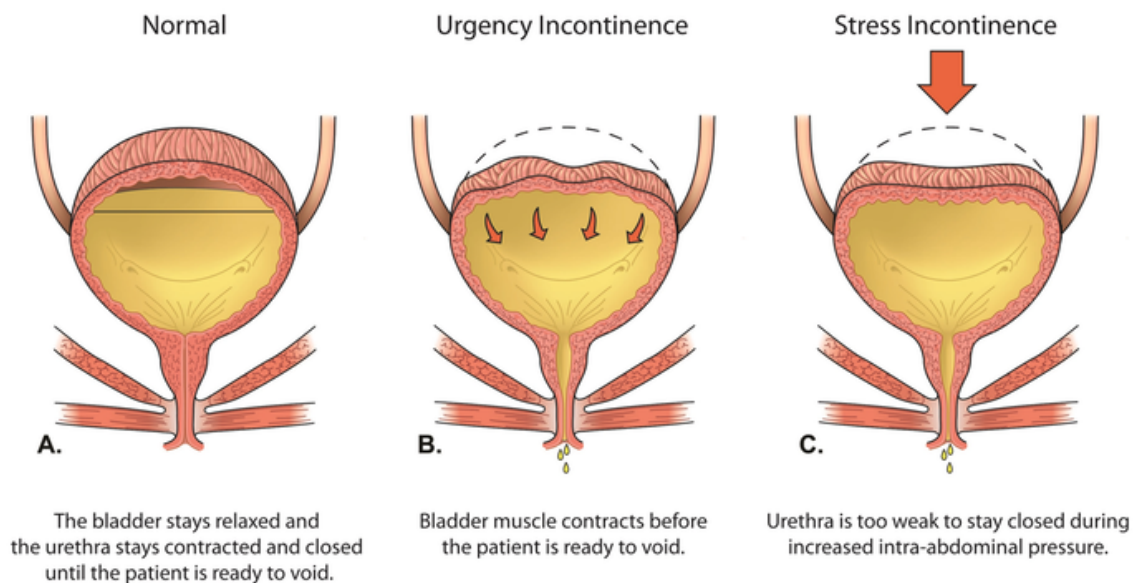


Incontinence - aka Leaking Urine

1 in 3 women will experience incontinence and only 1 in 12 will ever discuss it with their health care provider, either due to embarrassment or because they think it's normal and a consequence of either having kids or getting older or both. And while those things can contribute to why you experience leaking, it is a misconception to think that it is normal and it is also a misconception to think that there isn't anything you can do about it.

There are different types of incontinence but the most common is mixed urinary incontinence,

→ A mix of Urgency and Stress Urinary Incontinence



The bladder is a muscle and it contracts when you go to the bathroom. The series of reflexes and contractions occur at just the right times to allow this to function correctly and the pelvic floor muscles relax to allow the urethra to open and for the pee to come out.

With stress incontinence:

- The pelvic floor muscles are not strong enough to withstand the increase in intra-abdominal pressure during jumping, laughing, coughing or sneezing or whatever you are leaking with. All of those things increase the pressure in our abdominal cavity and that pressure is overpowering the pelvic floor muscles causing them to let go of the urethra allowing some pee to come out.

With Urgency Incontinence:

- The bladder is starting to contract not only when it's fully or almost full of pee and when you are sitting on the toilet like it's supposed to – it's now contracting when it's only $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$ full. Another way this occurs is that the bladder is not emptying all of the way so when you stand up after having gone to the bathroom, it hasn't fully emptied making it feel like you still have to go. The messaging has gotten a little mixed up and now the bladder isn't behaving like it should.
- This can make it feel like you aren't going to make it to the bathroom in time because all of a sudden you REALLLYYYYY have to go and it's not going to wait until you're in a bathroom!

Mixed Urinary Incontinence:

- A bit of both!

And while all of that may sound a bit worrisome, don't panic! There are **MANY** treatments for incontinence.

- There is grade A level evidence (the highest level of evidence) that Pelvic Floor muscle retraining helps to reduce and prevent Mixed Urinary Incontinence! And that it should be THE 1ST line of treatment for these symptoms.
- The pelvic floor also works and functions as part of the whole system, so by working the below list, you are working to improve or prevent leaking:
 - Breathing
 - Posture
 - Pressure Management
 - Core control and strength
 - Hip strength and body strength
 - You are helping to promote good function of the pelvic floor

Tips to help prevent & improve incontinence:

Do's:

- Stay hydrated (don't try to severely limit your fluid intake because you leak - but also, if you are drinking an excessive amount of liquid throughout the day, that can be hard on the bladder)
- Ensure complete bladder voiding (don't rush)
- Try to stay present – don't be on your phone or doing other things – try to focus on what you're doing.... Which is going to the bathroom
- Void after intercourse (Every. Single. Time)
- Wipe front to back (reduced the amount of bacteria getting close to and into the urethra)
- Practice **"The knack"** when doing things that increase intra-abdominal pressure (lifting, pushing, coughing, sneezing)
- Practice: Breath work, tall strong posture and pressure management
- See a pelvic floor Physiotherapist for an assessment of anything you can work on specifically
- You can try a pelvic floor training device like Perifit Pelvic Floor Trainer (website on resource page)

Avoid:

- Avoid tight and constricting underwear (thongs are included in this)
- Don't hover over the toilet seat (the pelvic floor is meant to relax when voiding – and it can't relax when hovering)
- Try not to constantly go to the bathroom "just in case" – Only go when you need to go if you can

There are SO many more Do's than Don'ts on this list! Recovery from leaking is an active process – you CAN train your pelvic floor and your bladder!

Urinary incontinence can have a really big impact on your quality of life. If you are suffering from symptoms of urinary incontinence, even if they aren't massively disruptive to your day to day, try a few of these things and see a pelvic floor physio to help get rid of it!

I do Pelvic Floor assessments at:

The Cleveland Clinic – Midtown location. (416) 507 6600 – midtown location
Ask to book a pelvic floor assessment with Tara Campbell.