

Don't let this treatable condition go untreated

Beyond management of the problem, there are treatments available...

It's an uncomfortable topic, one in which many older adults find extremely embarrassing to discuss, even with their doctor. Many just simply try to manage the condition by staying close to home, limiting physical activity and wearing disposable undergarments. However, there are medical treatments for urinary incontinence available that are highly effective to help older adults regain their freedom and allow them the flexibility to get back to living their lives.

It's important to understand that urinary incontinence is not a normal part of the aging process. The three major types of urinary incontinence most prevalent in older adults include: Stress, Urge and Overflow. Excessive use of alcohol, drinking large amounts of coffee or cola, as well as diuretics contribute to the condition. Medications to control high blood pressure, sedatives and decongestants also may affect bladder function.

Sometimes urinary incontinence is related to a condition known as Pelvic Floor Disorder, or PFD. The pelvic floor consists of muscles, ligaments and connective tissue that help support and control the bladder, vaginal, uterus and rectum. Damage to the pelvic floor can be caused by chronic diseases, birthing, obesity or some surgical procedures. Whatever the cause, when these muscles become weak or damaged, incontinence may occur.

Because there are many causes of urinary incontinence it's important to get a medical examination to diagnosis the problem and determine the best course for treatment. Treatment options can include minimally invasive surgical procedures, as well as non-surgical procedures. Non-surgical treatment of urinary incontinence may involve one or more of the following recommendations from your primary care doctor:

- Your doctor may refer you to a physical therapist to help you to establish an exercise program that involves strengthening the muscles at the base of the pelvis, called Kegal exercises. The therapist can also help you to re-train your bladder to function normally.
- Insertion of a rubber or plastic device, called a vaginal pessary, by a physician to support the pelvic floor and the prolapsed organ.
- Certain types of medications which help block the signals from the nervous system that cause the urgency to urinate frequently.

For more information and to discuss your symptoms, schedule an appointment to see you primary care physician today.

Don't let this treatable condition remain untreated.

**The Elliot.**
Live Better!

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