

Urge Incontinence in Women: Care Instructions



Your Care Instructions

Urge incontinence occurs when the need to urinate is so strong that you cannot reach the toilet in time, even when your bladder contains only a small amount of urine. This is also called overactive bladder or unstable bladder. Some women may have no warning before they leak urine. This condition does not cause major health problems. But it can be embarrassing and can affect a woman's self-esteem and confidence.

Treatment can cure or improve your symptoms.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Be safe with medicines. Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine. You will get more details on the specific medicines your doctor prescribes.
- Limit caffeine and alcohol. They stimulate urine production.
- Urinate every 2 to 4 hours during waking hours, even if you feel that you do not have to go.
- Do pelvic floor (Kegel) exercises, which tighten and strengthen pelvic muscles. To do Kegel exercises:
 - Squeeze the same muscles you would use to stop your urine. Your belly and thighs should not move.
 - Hold the squeeze for 3 seconds, then relax for 3 seconds.
 - Start with 3 seconds. Then add 1 second each week until you are able to squeeze for 10 seconds.
 - Repeat the exercise 10 to 15 times for each session. Do three or more sessions each day.
- Try wearing pads that absorb the leaks.
- Keep skin in the genital area dry.

When should you call for help?

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have new urinary symptoms. These may include leaking urine, having pain when urinating, or feeling like you need to urinate often.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You do not get better as expected.

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