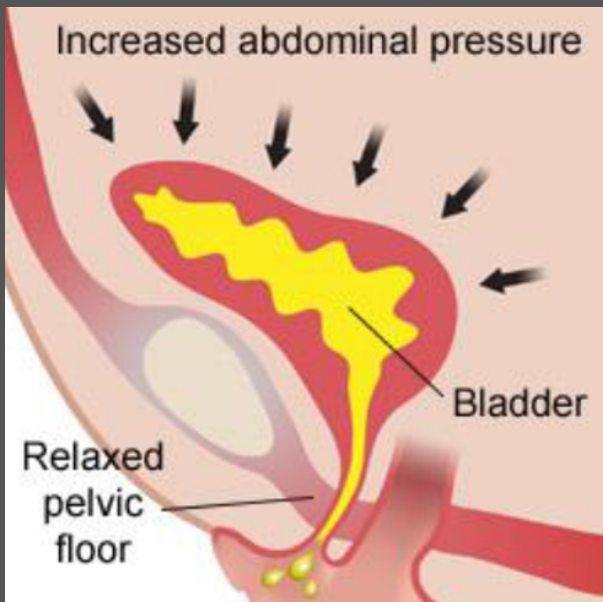


WHAT IS STRESS URINARY INCONTINENCE?

Stress Urinary Incontinence is the involuntary release of urine during laughter, coughing, lifting of objects or any movement that increases pressure on your bladder.

Urine is composed of water, electrolytes, and other waste material that has been filtered out of the blood in your kidneys. Urine is then transported via the ureters to your bladder, where it is stored. Once full, the muscles in the wall of your bladder contract forcing urine through the urethra and out of your body.

Sphincter muscles and pelvic floor muscles keep the urethra closed to avoid leakage of urine. These muscles relax at the same time the bladder contracts in order to allow urine to exit your body.



SIGNS + SYMPTOMS

Urine leakage caused by laughing, coughing, lifting of objects, or any movement that increases pressure on the bladder.

Stress Urinary Incontinence can cause embarrassment, fear, anxiety, and social isolation. For these reasons, it is important to take steps to address the problem.

Seeking treatment from a trained Pelvic Health Physiotherapist can help with the problem and can also improve self-esteem and restore confidence.

WHAT CAUSES STRESS URINARY INCONTINENCE?

There are several causes for Stress Urinary Incontinence, these include:

HORMONAL CHANGES

During the week before your menstrual cycle, estrogen levels fall, causing symptoms of stress and urinary incontinence to worsen. Additionally, as a woman goes through menopause, estrogen levels also fall causing the pelvic floor muscles to weaken. This results in less muscular pressure around the urethra, making stress urinary incontinence more likely.

PREGNANCY

If you are pregnant, you may experience stress urinary incontinence due to hormonal changes and the enlarging size of the uterus. During pregnancy, estrogen levels are lower, leading to less muscular strength in the sphincter and pelvic floor muscles. Additionally, as the fetus grows extra weight is placed on your bladder.

CHILDBIRTH

Vaginal delivery can damage your pelvic floor muscles making urine leakage more likely. The supporting tissues of your bladder can also be damaged during vaginal delivery causing a cystocele, or prolapse of your bladder, symptoms of which include urinary incontinence. You may not know you have suffered damage to your pelvic floor until after you have gone through menopause when the pelvic floor muscles are further weakened due to a fall in estrogen levels.

HYSTERECTOMY AND OTHER SURGERY

The bladder and uterus are very close together and have common supporting ligaments and muscles. Removal of the uterus, as in hysterectomy, risks damage to structures supporting the bladder. If these supporting structures are damaged, a prolapse or cystocele is likely to occur. Symptoms of a cystocele include urinary incontinence.

ILLNESSES

When you are ill and suffering from severe coughing, the pelvic floor muscles may fatigue and allow temporary stress incontinence due to an increase in abdominal pressure experienced while coughing..

OBESITY

Symptoms of a cystocele include urinary incontinence. Additionally, surgery may damage the nerves that supply the bladder, also leading to urinary incontinence.

BLADDER CANCER OR BLADDER STONES

Symptoms of bladder cancer or bladder stones include urinary incontinence, urgency, frequency, and painful urination. Other symptoms include blood in the urine and pelvic pain.

NEUROLOGICAL DAMAGE

Any neurological disorder such as multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease or stroke can cause urinary incontinence by interfering with the nerve signals that control the bladder. Additionally, if the nerves supplying the bladder or pelvic floor muscles are damaged, urinary incontinence may result.



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250.545.2922
250.542.2655
easthillphysio.com