



What is Stress Incontinence?

Stress incontinence is the involuntary leakage of urine during physical activities that increase pressure in the abdomen—like coughing, laughing, sneezing, lifting, or exercising

❑ Why Does It Happen?

Stress incontinence occurs when the pelvic floor muscles and urinary sphincter are too weak to prevent urine from leaking. Causes may include:

- Pregnancy and childbirth
- Menopause
- Aging
- Obesity
- Pelvic surgery (e.g., hysterectomy)

❑ How Is It Diagnosed?

Diagnosis is based on:

- Your symptoms and history
- A physical exam
- Sometimes a urine test to rule out infection

Special testing is rarely needed before starting treatment.

❑ First-Line Treatment Options

1. Pelvic Floor Exercises (Kegels)

These strengthen the muscles that control urination.

Tips:

- Do 3 sets of 10 contractions daily
- Hold each squeeze for 5–10 seconds
- Consider working with a pelvic floor physical therapist

2. Weight Loss

If you're overweight, losing even 5–10% of body weight can significantly reduce symptoms.

3. Lifestyle Changes

- Avoid caffeine and alcohol
- Quit smoking
- Manage constipation

4. Bladder Training

Scheduled bathroom visits and learning to delay urination (more helpful for urge incontinence).





❑ Other Treatment Options

Pessary Device

A small device inserted into the vagina to support the bladder—helpful for exercise-induced leakage or when avoiding surgery.

Surgical Options

If symptoms are severe or do not improve, consider:

- Midurethral sling (most common surgery)
- Other procedures discussed by a urogynecologist or urologist

❑ When to See a Specialist

You should consult a specialist if:

- Symptoms continue despite treatment
- You have difficulty emptying your bladder
- You have pelvic organ prolapse

❑ Remember:

You are not alone. Stress incontinence is common and treatable. Many women improve with simple exercises and behavioral strategies. Don't hesitate to seek help—there are options that work.





Resources

Chirag Dave, MD

About Me

Thank you for choosing me as your doctor. Please watch the video to learn more about me and my practice. I look forward to helping you on your journey to better health.

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Marietta Clinic

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