

Stress Urinary Incontinence

Information for patients

This leaflet can be made available in other formats including large print, CD and Braille and in languages other than English, upon request.

This leaflet tells you about stress urinary incontinence and explains treatments that can help.

What is stress urinary incontinence?

Stress urinary incontinence is when the pelvic floor muscles around your bladder and anus (back passage) become weak or stretched. Leakage from your bladder can happen when you cough, sneeze, laugh or move. Usually only a small amount of urine is passed.

What causes stress urinary incontinence?

Stress urinary incontinence can happen at any age and is more common in women due to pregnancy and delivery, drop of female hormones after the menopause, long term coughing, constipation and being overweight can all cause stress urinary incontinence.

What is the pelvic floor muscle?

The pelvic floor is made up of layers of muscles, stretching like a hammock from your pubic bone to the bottom of your backbone. These muscles help to hold your bladder and bowel in position, also the uterus (womb) in women. They prevent leakage from your bladder and bowel, only relaxing when your bladder or bowel is emptying.

What can I do to help myself?

You can help yourself by:

- doing pelvic floor exercises. These can improve your muscle tone (strength), your continence and quality of life. Your nurse or continence advisor will explain these exercises and give you a leaflet, 'How to do pelvic floor exercises'.
- losing weight, if you are overweight.
- giving up smoking.
- seeking medical advice if you have a long-term cough.

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- trying not to become constipated by eating a healthy diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables.
- drinking plenty of fluid each day, for example, 1½ litres (6 - 8 large cups or glasses). However, you should not drink more than 2 litres (4 pints) of fluid each day. If you drink less it will not stop you having stress incontinence.

Drinks containing alcohol or caffeine, for example, tea, coffee, cola or high energy drinks, such as Red Bull, will irritate your bladder and should be avoided. You can have drinks that do not contain caffeine, such as decaffeinated tea or coffee.

Are there any other treatments?

If pelvic floor exercises do not help, your nurse will discuss further treatments, for example, you may benefit from a referral to a continence adviser, physiotherapist or a doctor who specialises in urinary incontinence. Further treatments can include medication (tablets), nerve stimulation, physiotherapy or surgery.

What if I decide not to have treatment?

Your pelvic floor muscles can become weaker and your stress urinary incontinence may become worse.

Contact numbers

If you need further advice or have any worries or concerns, you should talk to your nurse or continence nurse.

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust Foundation

North Tees and Hartlepool Continence Advisor

Monday – Friday, 9.00am - 5.00pm
telephone SPA patient line: 01429 522500

Further information is available from:

Bladder and Bowel Foundation

SATRA Innovation Park
Rockingham Park
Kettering
Northants
NN16 9JH
telephone: 0845 345 0165
or via the website at www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org

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PromoCon

Disabled Living
Burrows House
10 Priestly Road
Wardley Industrial Estate
Worsley
Manchester
M28 2LY
telephone helpline: 0161 607 8219
or via the website at promocon@disabledliving.co.uk

RADAR KEYS (for disabled toilet access)

11 Church Street
Exmouth
EX8 1PE
telephone: 01395 222588
or via the website at www.radar.org.uk

Information used in the development of this leaflet

Abrams P, Khoury S, Wein A. The 1st international consultation on incontinence, co-sponsored by the WHO, Monaco: Health publication 1999.

Department of Health. Good practice in continence services. March 2000

www.patient.co.uk/health/stress-incontinence.htm

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This leaflet has been produced in partnership with patients and carers. All patient leaflets are regularly reviewed, and any suggestions you have as to how it may be improved are extremely valuable. Please write to the Quality Assurance Team, University Hospital of North Tees or email: patientinformation@nth.nhs.uk

Comments, Concerns, Compliments or Complaints

We are continually trying to improve the services we provide.

We want to know what we're doing well or if there's anything which we can improve, that's why the Patient Experience Team is here to help.

Our Patient Experience Team is here to try to resolve your concerns as quickly as possible. If you would like to contact or request a copy of our PET leaflet, please contact:

telephone: 01642 624719

Monday – Friday, 9.00 am – 4.00 pm

Messages can be left on the answering machine and will be picked up throughout the day.

freephone: 0800 092 0084

Mobile: (can use text): 0779 506 1883

Email: patientexperience@nth.nhs.uk

Out of hours if you wish to speak to a senior member of Trust staff, please contact the hospital switchboard who will bleep the appropriate person.

telephone: 01642 617617

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

The Patient Experience Team is available to discuss your concerns in person Monday – Friday, 1.30 pm – 4.30 pm. The office is based on the ground floor at the University Hospital of North Tees.

Data Protection and use of patient information

The Trust has developed a Data Protection Policy in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. All of our staff respect this policy and confidentiality is adhered to at all times. If you require further information please contact the Information Governance Team.

telephone: 01642 833551 or email: information.governance@nth.nhs.uk

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