Bladder Health Matters

A presentation by the National Association For Continence in honor of the Bladder Health Awareness Campaign
The bladder is a hollow, balloon-shaped organ made of a thin layer of muscle behind the pubic bone.

- The function of the bladder is to store urine.
- The bladder stretches as it fills. It can hold between 10 to 20 ounces of urine.
Loss of bladder control is a common condition that affects many Americans. 25 million adult Americans and 200 million people worldwide suffer from bladder control loss. The effect of urinary incontinence on a person’s quality of life can vary considerably. In the U.S., the total direct and indirect cost of urinary incontinence in the year 2000 was estimated to be $19.5 billion.
Where do urinary control problems begin?

- In the bladder:
  - failure to store or failure to empty the urine
- In the sphincter:
  - failure to open, to close, or stay closed
- In the spinal cord:
  - absent or incorrect signals
- In the brain:
  - no message or the wrong message
Risk Factors Associated with Bladder Control Issues

- Limited mobility
- Multiple pregnancies and vaginal deliveries
- Menopause
- Constipation
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Cigarette Smoking
- Diet
- Treatment for Cancer
- BPH
Types of Bladder Health Issues

- **Stress Incontinence**
  - Occurs during increased physical effort or activity.
  - This condition allows urine to leak when you do anything that strains or stresses the abdomen.
    - Ex) coughing, sneezing, lifting, laughing, exercise

- **Urgency or Overactive Bladder (OAB)**
  - Occurs when the bladder contracts without you wanting it to.
  - You may feel as if you can’t wait to reach a toilet and you may leak urine on the way.
Types of Bladder Health Issues Continued...

- **Overflow Incontinence**
  - Occurs when the bladder doesn’t empty properly and the amount of urine produced exceeds the capacity of the bladder.
  - Characterized by frequent urination and dribbling

- **Mixed Incontinence**
  - Combination of urge and stress incontinence
Techniques that promote Bladder Control

- Pelvic Muscle Exercises (Kegels)
  - Through regular exercise you can build strength and endurance to help improve, regain, or maintain bladder control.

- Dietary Changes
  - Eliminating or moderating caffeine, alcohol, & artificial sweeteners

- Weight Loss
  - Loss of 5-10% of body weight can decrease incontinence episodes as much as 50-60%.
When should I seek treatment for my Bladder Health?

- Leakage of urine
- An urgent need to rush to the
- Frequent bladder infections
- Pain related to filling the bladder
- Inability to urinate/urinary retention
- Weakness of the urinary stream with or without a feeling of incomplete bladder emptying
- Changes in urination related to a neurological condition
Who should I talk to about my Bladder Health?

- **Urologists** - surgeon who specializes in the urinary conditions of men and women. Many urologists have advanced training in the surgical correction and medical treatments for incontinence.

- **Urogynecologists** - surgeons who become specialists with additional training and experience in the evaluation and treatment of urinary incontinence, pelvic floor disorders, and other female bladder health issues.

- **Gynecologists** - a doctor specializing in the reproductive health of women.

- **Geriatricians** - a doctor who specializes in treating older people, may have advanced training in the treatment and management of incontinence.

- **Nurse specialists, psychologists, physical and occupational therapists, and behavioral scientists** – may have training that qualifies them to offer nonsurgical treatments for incontinence.
Want additional information?

For free additional information and pamphlets or to contact our Health Educator with questions concerning bladder health e-mail memberservices@nafc.org
1-800-BLADDER
www.nafc.org