

Menopause and gynecological conditions:

Urinary incontinence

Urinary incontinence (UI) is the complaint of any involuntary leakage of urine. It affects millions of women worldwide and prevalence increases with age.

Types of incontinence

- **Stress:** involuntary loss of urine on effort or physical exertion
- **Urge:** involuntary loss of urine associated with urgency
- **Mixed:** involuntary loss of urine associated with urgency, physical effort, exertion, sneezing or coughing
- **Postural:** involuntary loss of urine associated with change of body position
- **Coital:** involuntary loss of urine with coitus

Risk factors

- Age
- Obesity
- Obstetric history (parity, pregnancy, mode of delivery)
- Hysterectomy
- Systemic menopausal hormone therapy
- **Lifestyle:** consumption of coffee and other caffeinated beverages and alcohol, smoking, exercise
- **Comorbidity** – diabetes, urinary tract infections, cognitive or physical impairment, cardiac or neurological disease, depression

Many women do not report symptoms due to embarrassment or the belief that it is a normal part of aging.

Assessment

- History and bladder diary, urgency scale and post-void residual volume
- Urinalysis
- Physical examination (assessment of pelvic floor muscle strength and pelvic organ prolapse)
- Specialized tests for stress or urge UI
- Urodynamic studies, if necessary
- Imaging

Conservative management

- Smoking cessation
- Weight loss
- Management of constipation
- Timed voiding during the day
- Management of fluid intake
- Reduction of caffeine and alcohol intake
- Bladder and pelvic floor muscle training
- Vaginal estrogens, anticholinergics, mirabegron, botulinum toxin type A
- Sacral neuromodulation
- Posterior tibial nerve stimulation

Other strategies

- Laser therapy (though further evidence from randomized trials is required)
- Mid-urethral slings (complications involving exposure and erosion restrict use of synthetic meshes)
- Urethral bulking injections
- Retropubic surgical suspensions

Further information

EMAS (2025). CareOnline. Health at menopause and beyond <https://emas-online.org/guidelines-and-education/#emas-care-online>

Proceedings of the 7th International Consultation on Incontinence (2024). https://www.ics.org/Publications/ICL_7/Incontinence-7th-Edition-15-03-2024.pdf

European Association of Urology guideline: Non-neurogenic female LUTS <https://www.uroweb.org/guidelines/non-neurogenic-female-luts>