IN CONTROL:
The Facts About Male Urinary Incontinence
OPTIONS FOR COPING STRATEGIES & TREATMENT
Incontinence is a topic most men have not heard about and would rather not talk or even think about – after all, who wants to give a play-by-play of the workings of their internal plumbing? But nearly 25 million Americans, including 3.4 million men, live with incontinence everyday. In fact, 1 in 10 men over 40 will experience incontinence.

Incontinence is defined as a loss of bladder and/or bowel control, resulting in the involuntary loss of urine and/or stool. What many men don’t realize is that incontinence is a symptom, not a disease, and there are a number of factors and disorders that can lead to it, including birth defects, pelvic surgery, injuries to the pelvic region, infection, and degenerative changes associated with aging. It is also one of the most common side effects of all prostate cancer treatments, and the most common side effect of prostatectomy. 39 to 63 percent of prostate cancer patients experience some level of urinary incontinence for one year after surgery.

Urinary incontinence never entered my mind until I was faced with prostate cancer at age 50.

Thankfully, there are a number of resources and support organizations, like Us TOO International, available to help you take control of your incontinence, reducing or eliminating it by identifying and treating and/or managing the underlying condition. This brochure is intended to provide you with information regarding urinary incontinence specifically.

Understanding Your Urinary Incontinence

The more educated you are about your urinary incontinence, the more in control and confident you will feel in making choices about how best to treat and manage your condition.

Urinary incontinence is defined as any unintentional loss of urine. There are three common types of urinary incontinence that occur in men: stress urinary incontinence, urge urinary incontinence and overflow urinary incontinence. It is also not unusual to experience more than one type at a time. Each has different causes and is associated with different symptoms and treatments.

Urinary Incontinence & Prostate Cancer

One in six men in the U.S. will get prostate cancer during his lifetime. A prostate cancer diagnosis can be overwhelming as you navigate doctor visits and undergo treatment. Additionally, you can be faced with intrusive side effects of the condition and treatment, including the common side effect of urinary incontinence.

THE GOOD NEWS? For most men recovering from prostate cancer, urinary incontinence symptoms are temporary and as your body heals, bladder control will be restored in the weeks or months following surgery.
After prostate cancer surgery, I experienced urinary incontinence. It took time but I regained my control.

### TYPES OF URINARY INCONTINENCE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Stress Urinary Incontinence</strong></td>
<td>Stress urinary incontinence, sometimes referred to as effort incontinence, is the most prevalent type of urinary incontinence in men and is common following a prostatectomy.</td>
<td>- You experience bladder leakage when you cough, laugh, sneeze, engage in physical activity</td>
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<td>Stress incontinence is caused in large part by insufficient strength of the sphincter or pelvic floor muscles – the group of muscles located underneath the pelvis that are responsible for bladder control.</td>
<td>- You leak urine in small amounts (drops, spurts)</td>
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<td>- You do not experience urinary incontinence at night</td>
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<td>- You sometimes have leakage without the sensation of urine loss</td>
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<td><strong>Urge Urinary Incontinence</strong></td>
<td>Urge urinary incontinence is sometimes referred to as overactive bladder, and is a sudden, involuntary emptying of the bladder. It can be more common in men who have had prostate surgery.</td>
<td>- You often feel a strong, uncontrolled urge to urinate</td>
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<td>Urge incontinence is caused by abnormal bladder contractions.</td>
<td>- You urinate more frequently</td>
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<td>- You experience bladder leakage at night</td>
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<td>- You leak on the way to the bathroom</td>
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<td>- Your urinary incontinence involves a moderate to large amount of urine leakage (gush)</td>
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<td><strong>Overflow Urinary Incontinence</strong></td>
<td>Overflow urinary incontinence is the constant leakage of urine and can be more common in those men with an enlarged prostate.</td>
<td>- Your bladder never feels empty, even after urinating</td>
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<td>Overflow urinary incontinence occurs when the bladder becomes too full because it cannot properly release urine due to an obstruction of the urethra. Overflow urinary incontinence can also occur when the bladder fails to contract as it should – a result of weak bladder muscles.</td>
<td>- You are unable to or have difficulty urinating, even when you feel the urge</td>
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<td>- You continue to dribble/leak after urinating</td>
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<td>- You need to urinate frequently, including at night, but can often only pass a small amount of urine</td>
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Why Does Urinary Incontinence Occur During & After Prostate Cancer Treatment?!

Because of the prostate’s proximity to the urethra, which controls the flow of urine out of the body, changes in shape or size of the urethra gland can cause temporary bladder control issues.

Urinary Incontinence Treatment Options

PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISES

Whether your urinary incontinence is a result of prostate cancer treatment or a symptom of another condition, your first line of defense is strengthening the pelvic floor muscles through pelvic floor exercises, also known as Kegel exercises.

How Do Targeted Exercises Work?

The pelvic floor muscles – the group of muscles underneath the pelvis – are largely responsible for bladder control. Just like the other muscles in your body, you need to exercise the muscles to strengthen them and ensure they function properly.

After prostate cancer treatment, parts of the mechanisms that hold urine in the bladder may have been removed or damaged. This means that the pelvic floor muscles that remain have to work harder to hold urine in the bladder when you move about, cough, sneeze and laugh. Learning how to do pelvic floor exercises correctly before you begin your prostate cancer treatment can help to greatly improve stress and urge urinary incontinence if they are not too severe.

Bladder re-training and pelvic floor exercises are among the least invasive treatment options for improving urinary incontinence. These exercises help rebuild the muscle strength of your bladder and prevent leakage, particularly for men with stress or urge urinary incontinence.

The two most widely-used methods for prostate cancer treatment are surgical removal and radiation therapy. Men who choose to have a surgical removal may experience stress urinary incontinence, because the surgery can damage the nerves that control bladder function. Men who undergo radiation therapy may experience urge urinary incontinence, more frequent urination urges and leakage, because the radiation decreases the bladder’s capacity for urine and causes spasms that can push urine out.

How Do I Work these Muscles?¹³

Pelvic floor exercises are done by discreetly flexing and squeezing the muscles around your bladder. Pelvic floor exercises can be done anywhere – at the office, during a meeting or while out with friends. Here’s how:

► Find the right muscles by squeezing the muscles around the anus, which should lift your penis slightly and automatically contract the pelvic floor

► Hold and squeeze for a few seconds and then release for just as many seconds, building up to 10 second intervals

► After repeating several times a day (between 30-40 reps), you should notice a difference in bladder control after about two to four months

BIOFEEDBACK¹⁴

Biofeedback is a treatment option often used for men who have relatively mild urinary incontinence, and for those men who are looking for a way to improve their urinary incontinence relatively soon – within three to six months – after prostate surgery. Biofeedback also allows men to confirm whether they are doing pelvic floor exercises correctly.

A biofeedback treatment program involves regular, weekly visits with a trained physical therapist or nurse specialist. During sessions, the man is instructed on how to contract his pelvic floor muscles, while a sensor is inserted into the rectum or placed just outside the anal opening. This sensor is attached to a computer that allows the man to see his pelvic muscles contract. Sometimes, the physical therapist or nurse may recommend including electrical stimulation as part of the program. In this case, an electrical signal is sent to the pelvic floor muscles to help strengthen them.

MEDICATION & DRUG THERAPY

Prescription drugs are used in the treatment of urinary incontinence and can relieve the symptoms of urinary incontinence in some people. Typically, prescription drugs are recommended more for those suffering from chronic symptoms. Medications to treat urge urinary incontinence have been available for quite some time and more recently, new medications have come out that are designed to treat stress urinary incontinence.¹⁵

Major types of medications used to manage urinary incontinence include anticholinergics, alpha-adrenergic agonists and the antidepressant imipramine. Below is a brief overview of each type, along with common side effects.

If treatment is successful, symptoms may ease in about a month. Because drugs designed to treat urinary incontinence require a prescription, you will have to discuss your specific symptoms, medical history and options with your health care provider.

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<tr>
<th>Medication Type</th>
<th>How it Works</th>
<th>Side Effects</th>
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<td>Anticholinergics</td>
<td>Blocks acetylcholine, a chemical which signals the bladder to contract, causing the urge to urinate</td>
<td>Dry mouth, constipation, heartburn, blurry vision, urinary retention, impaired memory, confusion</td>
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<td>Alpha-adrenergic agonists</td>
<td>Mimics norepinephrine, which stimulates alpha-adrenergic receptors. These receptors contract the urethral muscle, tightening the urinary sphincter to prevent urine from leaking</td>
<td>Agitation, insomnia, anxiety, dry mouth, headache</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imipramine</td>
<td>Tricyclic antidepressant with both anticholinergic and alpha-adrenergic effects, it makes the bladder muscle relax and causes the urethral muscle to contract</td>
<td>Irregular heartbeat, dizziness, fainting, drowsiness, dry mouth, blurry vision, constipation</td>
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EXTERNAL DEVICES
Depending on the severity of your urinary incontinence, there are external devices available to help manage your symptoms. Two common options are external catheter collection systems and penile compression devices.

External catheter collection system
A condom-like sheath made from latex rubber, PVC or silicone that is placed over the penis for urine collection. A collection tube connects the sheath to a urinary drainage bag, which may be worn on your leg or attached to your abdomen.

Penile compression device
Often referred to as a “penile clamp,” this device mechanically compresses the soft tissue of the penis to temporarily close off the urethra, which blocks urine leakage from occurring. A compression device is normally placed halfway down the shaft of the penis, and can be either inflatable or similar to a mechanical clamp. Both varieties are reusable. When you need to urinate, the device must be removed and then reapplied.

External devices require medical assistance, so if you are interested, speak with your doctor about your options.

SURGICAL PROCEDURES
In certain cases, surgery has been proven as an effective method to improve or cure urinary incontinence, but the surgical procedure that may be right for you depends on the type and underlying causes of your urinary incontinence. There are three main types of urinary incontinence surgery:

- Injectable Fillers – a surgeon injects a collagen-like substance into the tissues surrounding the urethra to improve urinary muscle control. The procedure is less invasive than other options and can be performed in a doctor’s office or other outpatient setting. The injection is not effective for everyone, however, as the collagen injection can migrate away from the sphincter and cause the problem to recur. Reported success for Contigen, one of the most widely-used collagens used in the injection, ranges from 8 to 20 percent.

- Male Sling – a treatment option performed on men who suffer from mild to severe urinary incontinence, this procedure involves implanting a mesh into the body to compress the urethra. The procedure takes one hour to perform and can typically be done in an outpatient setting or with an overnight stay in the hospital. A catheter is left in place for 24 to 48 hours after surgery and many men report regaining control over their urine immediately after the removal of the catheter. Success rates vary depending on the type of sling implanted, but approximately 40 percent of men who undergo the procedure no longer experience incontinence, while 30 to 40 percent report an improvement in their incontinence.

My urinary incontinence felt daunting. But I kept working on my exercises and after four months I was almost completely continent.
Artificial urinary sphincter (AUS) – a device surgically implanted into men suffering from moderate to severe stress urinary incontinence. The AUS simulates the urinary sphincter function and is comprised of three components: a pump placed inside the scrotum, a cuff that closes the urethra and a pressure regulating balloon placed in the lower abdomen. To urinate, a man must squeeze the pump in the scrotum, which opens the cuff on the urethra and allows urine to flow out of the body. The procedure requires surgery and recovery time is longer than with many other treatment options. It takes four to six weeks before post-operative swelling subsides and the device is fully functional. Men with stress urinary incontinence who have had the surgery report a 90 percent satisfaction rate.

Taking Charge While in Recovery and Beyond

No matter what course of treatment you choose to deal with your urinary incontinence, you are going to need some support in the meantime. Fortunately, absorbent products for male urinary incontinence have evolved from bulky, one-size-doesn’t-fit-all products to guards, pads and underwear designed for a modern lifestyle.

Things to consider when selecting a urinary incontinence product:

► Choose a product that is specifically designed for the male anatomy, as it will fit better and have a highly absorbent target zone, providing protection where you need it most.

► Evaluate your amount of urine leakage, as products range in absorbency from very light to very heavy leakage.

► Consider your personal preferences. Do you want a guard that you can slip into your underwear to protect you from leaks? Or would you prefer to wear protective but discreet underwear designed to look and feel like regular briefs?

► Be sure to look for high quality products that offer features such as odor protection and faster absorption rates. These products tend to be more effective, thus saving you money in the long run.

Finding the absorbent product that is right for you will help you to feel more self assured and in control as you get back into your everyday activities and hobbies. Many of today’s absorbent products fit very discreetly so that you can feel confident after surgery or radiation and when you return to work or head out for a round of golf again.

Everyday Success: Small Changes, Big Improvements

We’ve all heard it before – one small change can make all the difference. This phrase is often heard in reference to how you live your life or approach your relationships, but it also holds true for urinary incontinence. There are a number of key changes you can make in your everyday life
that can have a big – and positive – impact on your urinary incontinence symptoms. Following are five behavioral changes you can make to improve your urinary incontinence symptoms:

▸ **Stay Hydrated.** Although it may seem counterintuitive, it is important to stay hydrated by drinking at least 6-8 glasses of water per day. If you limit your fluid intake, the concentration of your urine will be thicker and irritate your bladder, causing you to urinate more frequently. Stagger your fluid intake throughout the day to ease the feeling of a full bladder.

▸ **Avoid Bladder Irritants.** Both caffeine and alcohol have diuretic properties, which irritate the bladder and make the symptoms of urinary incontinence worse. Additionally, many men find that certain foods (typically spicy or acidic foods) make their symptoms worse. Make note of changes in your symptoms tied to certain foods and cut them out of your diet.

▸ **Quit Smoking.** You’ve most likely heard by now that smoking cigarettes doesn’t have a positive affect on your body, but you may not have heard that tobacco aggravates your urinary tract, worsening the symptoms of urinary incontinence.

—if you are overweight, losing a few extra pounds can make a big difference...

So kick the habit for good. If you need help quitting, visit www.smokefree.gov.

▸ **Lose Weight.** Being overweight puts pressure on your bladder, increasing your chance of experiencing urinary incontinence. If you are overweight, losing a few extra pounds can make a big difference by lightening the pressure you are exerting on your bladder.

▸ **Keep Track.** One effective way to manage your urinary incontinence is to realize the subtle and not-so-subtle triggers that affect your condition. Write down your behavior in a voiding diary for a few days and track leakage back to particular incidents – you may find that certain foods, beverages, or even sitting positions are causing your leaks. Avoiding triggers can help you lessen symptoms of the condition.
Day-to-Day: Confidence is Key

Although you may feel like you are the only one dealing with this problem, there are 3.4 million men who also suffer from urinary incontinence – and most of them feel the same way you do. For a lot of guys, the self-imposed embarrassment and isolation caused by urinary incontinence can be almost as bad as the condition itself. By putting yourself in the driver’s seat, you can boost your confidence and feel more in control of your situation. Following are a few helpful tips:

- **Make Plans.** Knowing where you are going (and that there will be an accessible bathroom) can help ease a lot of the anxiety you may experience about going out. If you’re headed somewhere outdoors, like the golf course or a fishing trip, you may want to opt for an absorbent product designed for heavier leakage. When traveling, plan out your route and regular rest intervals to assure you will have the time and a place to use the restroom.

- **Do Your Homework.** Go on the offensive against urinary incontinence and arm yourself with knowledge about the condition. There are a lot of great, free resources out there to help guys learn more about urinary incontinence. Knowing what is happening in your body, why it is happening and how to prevent it will give you more control over your condition.

- **Keep it Clean.** Many men worry about remaining hygienic while dealing with urinary incontinence and an easy way to put your mind at ease is to buy products that ensure protection. It is important to use the right product for your leakage amount and body frame to avoid unpleasant smells and leaks. There are products available designed specifically for the male anatomy that are discreet, comfortable and will prevent mishaps.

- **Join the Club.** An estimated one in ten men experiences urinary incontinence and each of them may have their own tips, advice and experiences on dealing with the condition. Visit the Us TOO website or ask your doctor about support groups in your area, or join an Us TOO Prostate Pointers online discussion community to ask questions anonymously.

I was surprised how many other men shared an incontinence problem with me.
Additional Resources

- LockerTalk: www.lockertalk.com, for male urinary incontinence information
- National Association For Continence (NAFC): www.nafc.org
- Simon Foundation for Continence: www.simonfoundation.org
- The Canadian Continence Foundation: www.continence-fdn.ca
- Prostate Cancer Research Foundation of Canada: www.prostatecancer.ca
- Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates (SUNA): www.suna.org
References

4 Mosby (2006) Mosby’s Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing and Health Professions (7th Ed.).
7 American Cancer Society – How Many Men Get Prostate Cancer? 1.22.09
8 American Cancer Society – How Many Men Get Prostate Cancer? 1.22.09
9 American Cancer Society – How is Prostate Cancer Treated?
11 WebMD – Prostate Cancer and Incontinence.
13 TENA.us. “The Exercise Area.”
22 Recent survey conducted by Urologic Diseases in America Project, sponsored by National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases.

Questions Your Doctor May Ask About Your Urinary Incontinence

1. What types of symptoms are you experiencing?
2. How often do you experience urine leakage?
3. Do you experience urinary incontinence at night?
4. How long have you been having urine leakage?
5. Are you on any medications?
6. Can you tell me about your diet and eating habits?
7. Can you tell me about your exercise habits?
8. Have you had any past surgeries or injuries to your pelvic region?
9. How many pads do you use per day? Per night?
10. How is urinary incontinence affecting your regular routine and activities?
Us TOO International is a 501-c-3 nonprofit, grassroots organization started in 1990 by prostate cancer survivors for prostate cancer patients, survivors, and their loved ones, and has grown to more than 325 peer-to-peer support group chapters in the U.S. and abroad.

Us TOO provides the finest global prostate cancer volunteer network, offering support, education, and awareness. Us TOO does not give medical advice in its support chapters or literature, but we are dedicated to helping men and their families learn more about prostate cancer, so they can make better decisions on treatment options and cope with emotional and quality of life issues they may face.

Us TOO produces and provides FREE information and materials for prostate cancer patients and their loved ones, available in both print format and on our comprehensive website, www.ustoo.org. Us TOO’s materials span the full range of prostate cancer, from early detection to new diagnosis and advanced disease.

For additional information, contact Us TOO at 800-80-UsTOO (800-808-7866) or visit www.ustoo.org.

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