



What can be done to treat female incontinence?

There are a number of treatments for urinary incontinence. The best approach depends on what's causing it and your personal preference.

- **Fluid modification** Drinking lots of caffeinated drinks can irritate the bladder, making the symptoms worse. Keeping a bladder diary can help you work out if you need to drink a little more (very concentrated urine may irritate the bladder) or cut back.
- **Specialist physiotherapy** Pelvic floor exercises can improve bladder control. You'll also learn distraction techniques which diminish the urgent need to pee, so you then walk calmly to the toilet.
- **Tablets** Medication can help to calm the bladder if it is overactive. About 60-70% of women will gain some improvement. But it has to be used long-term and some patients develop side effects, such as constipation.
- **Day-case keyhole surgery** Tension-free vaginal tape (TVT) surgery is often used and involves a mesh-like tape being positioned under the urethra like a hammock to support it and return it to its normal position.
- **Prolapse repair and vaginal rejuvenation** Sometimes it is necessary to perform a vaginal repair procedure at the same time as the surgery to correct urinary incontinence. This surgery pulls together the loose or torn tissue in the area of prolapse and strengthens the wall of the vagina.

Can you trust your bladder?

Does it feel like you've lost control of your body? You're not alone...

At least one in five women suffer from urinary incontinence. It can be caused by a weakening of the vaginal muscles, by damage to the tissues or ligaments supporting the bladder or is the result of vaginal relaxation stemming from childbirth, ageing or trauma.

The definition of urinary incontinence is some degree of uncontrolled leakage of urine, which can range from mild to severe. For instance, some women find that a few drops of urine escape when they cough, sneeze or do exercise (including sex), which is known as stress

incontinence. Other women find they get a sudden urge to go to the toilet, need to urinate often or are woken up several times at night. This may be due to an overactive bladder. In very severe cases, women find that they have no control over their bladder function.

There is no need to suffer in silence

Consultant gynaecologist/urogynaecologist Mr Andrew Hextall and the experienced, caring and sympathetic team at Spire Harpenden Hospital can offer you a variety of treatments that will make you feel confident and relaxed again.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To make an appointment, call Spire Harpenden Hospital on 0800 585112 and ask to make an appointment with Mr Andrew Hextall.

'My life is so different now I don't have the constant anxiety of being wet. I feel confident and happy again.' Mrs Gallagher