

# WHAT EVERY WOMAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT HER BLADDER...



**1 in 3 women suffer**  
with embarrassing leaks

**Up to 70% improve**  
with specialised physiotherapy (including pelvic floor muscle exercises, bladder retraining and advice) so don't put up with it anymore!

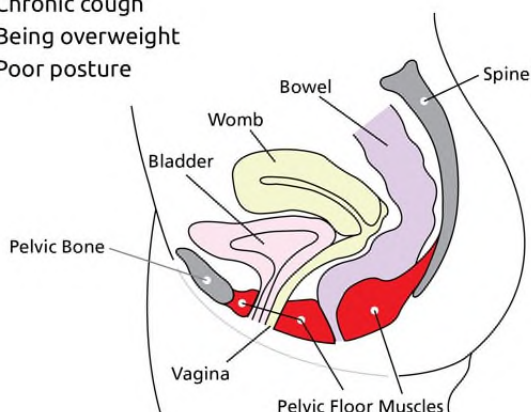
**Stress Urinary Incontinence**  
Loss of urine on exertion (laughing, coughing, sneezing, exercising)

**Urge Urinary Incontinence**  
Loss of urine following an urgent need to empty the bladder

**Mixed Urinary Incontinence**  
A combination of stress and urge urinary incontinence

## Causes of Pelvic Floor Problems

- ▶ Pregnancy & Childbirth
- ▶ Menopause
- ▶ Constipation & Straining
- ▶ Heavy lifting
- ▶ Chronic cough
- ▶ Being overweight
- ▶ Poor posture



## TOP TIPS FOR A HEALTHY BLADDER

Do your pelvic floor (kegel) exercises 3 times a day. If you cannot feel a definite lift and a definite release of these muscles you should see a chartered physiotherapist in women's health and continence who can teach you how to do them effectively.

Squeeze your pelvic floor muscles strongly before you cough or sneeze.

Don't go to the toilet "just in case": Emptying your bladder when it's not full can teach it bad habits.

Avoid tea, coffee, fizzy drinks and alcohol: These drinks can irritate the bladder, making incontinence worse. Try to drink water instead.

Avoid constipation & straining. A healthy bowel habit can help to reduce strain on the pelvic floor muscles.

## Pelvic Floor Muscle Exercises

- ▶ Lie on your back with your knees bent or sit in a chair with your back supported.
- ▶ Imagine trying to lift your vagina up inside or imagine you are trying to hold back urine, or wind from the back passage.
- ▶ Build up to holding this for 10 seconds and repeat 10 times. As the muscles get stronger you will feel a stronger squeeze and lift.
- ▶ Now do some quick strong lifts of your pelvic floor. Repeat until the muscles get tired.

### EXERCISE TIPS!

- Keep breathing normally
- Try to avoid clenching your buttocks or legs
- Relax the muscles completely after each exercise

For a list of Chartered Physiotherapists who specialise in Women's Health & Continence contact the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists on [info@iscp.ie](mailto:info@iscp.ie).

