



Central Station Well

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7 Reasons Bladder Leaks Happen and How to Stop Them

By Dr. Maureen Mason



#1 Overflow

Waiting too long to urinate can lead to overfilling the bladder so that it suddenly empties. This is an “overflow” type leak. If you get in the habit of “ignoring your bladder” it fills to the maximum, and then leaks.

#2 Stress Incontinence

Physical stress or pressure on the bladder from bending, coughing, sneezing, laughing, jumping, and other activities creates pressure into the pelvis, which can overwhelm the bladder holding capacity. This can go along with other problems as listed below.

#3 Weak Pelvic Floor Muscles (Kegels)

If the pelvic floor muscles that stop urine are weak, they may not do their job to automatically hold the outlet, the urethra, closed. The muscles must hold back the pressure of a full bladder. The pelvic floor muscles ideally tighten with exertion to prevent leaks.

4 Tight Pelvic Floor Muscles (Kegels)

If the pelvic floor muscles are too tight, leaks can happen. This is because there is no stretch or rebound ability in the muscles and the ligaments supporting the bladder. (This is also called a “short pelvic floor”). A person who clenches or squeezes the pelvic area a lot may have this happen, such as an athlete or person who works out a lot. The concept of “too tight” surprises many people.



#5 Urge Incontinence

There can be a sudden sensation of the need to urinate and the bladder contracts and empties. This happens in bladders which are overly sensitive to filling. When an “urge” occurs, the bladder muscle tightens and shrinks the bladder down to release urine. Urge incontinence may happen with a small leak, and then an individual makes it to the toilet to further empty. Or the urge urinary incontinence may be a full leak requiring clothing changes. Urge “sensations” normally occur without leakage and it is the bladder’s signal to us that it is time to urinate. People with urge incontinence often have urgency and frequency too, needing to rush to the toilet, and pee often.



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6 Functional incontinence

Mobility problems can make it challenging to make it to the toilet. Difficulty standing up, walking to the restroom, and instability standing or sitting down on the toilet lead to functional incontinence. The basic function of toilet use is impaired. Transporting oneself to the toilet requires brain and muscle function, balance and control, and a living environment where a toilet is easily available. Functional incontinence most typically occurs with elders who are frail and require commode chairs, and assistance in and out of bed.

7 Medical Problems such as kidney stones, infection, or autoimmune illness

Medical problems require medical help. Sometimes bladder leaks are related to pressure from irritable bowel syndrome issues such as constipation or bloating, or kidney or bladder infections, autoimmune illness such as interstitial cystitis, or cancer conditions. Pregnancy, childbirth, menopause, and male andropause and prostate problems can lead to bladder problems. Scar tissue that presses down on the bladder can cause leaks. See your health care professional if you have a new leakage, increasing leaks, or signs of infection such as pain, dizziness, or health changes such as unintentional weight loss, or fatigue.

Now you know about types of incontinence, and some reasons why they may occur. You may have leakage from overflow, stress incontinence, urge incontinence, pelvic floor muscles (Kegels) that are too weak or too tight, and, functional incontinence. You know there can be medical problems causing leaks.



How to stop leaks? Consider:

Overflow

- You may need to pay more attention to bladder signals for filling, to avoid “overflow”
- You may need to go more often if you are waiting too long, such as a schedule to empty every 2 to 3 hours
- You may need to reduce your fluid intake if excessive

Weakness

How can you find out if your pelvic floor muscles are too weak? Ideally, by seeing a Pelvic Physical Therapist. 40% of people have trouble correctly tightening their pelvic floor muscles. Perhaps you can correctly tighten the pelvic floor so the genitals “lift up” in males, and the vaginal sphincter muscles lift “up and in” for females. Yet often, people push down or clench big muscles such as the gluteals, or abdominals, without really contracting the pelvic muscles. People may incorrectly think “kegels did not work” but they were not doing them correctly.

You can learn to :

- Strengthen your pelvic floor muscles (Kegels) with pelvic, hip, leg, and core training exercises. Fast, slow contractions and long holds are part of training.
- Practice sneezing, bending, lifting, and other activities while contracting your pelvic floor muscles
- Ramp up fitness workouts with integrated core control including pelvic muscle contractions to match exertion
- Work with pelvic health equipment to improve your pelvic floor muscles strength



Let's create a plan to help you regain pelvic function and body confidence.

[Book a discovery call](#)



Tightness

How can you find out if your pelvic floor muscles are too tight? Ideally, by seeing a Pelvic Physical Therapist, and performing relaxation and stretching exercises.

You can learn to:

- Relax your pelvic floor muscles (Kegels) with breathing practices and therapeutic exercises
- Pay more attention to “letting go”, or relaxing fully while emptying your bladder
- Check yourself during the day to see if you are clenching in relation to stress, or over-exercise
- Work with pelvic health equipment to relax-release your pelvic floor muscles

You can learn more about this topic in “The Pelvic Rehabilitation Guide Across the Lifespan” Dr Maureen Mason

Urge incontinence

- Re-train your bladder to wait longer, to hold more. Start with a few minutes, and build up to a longer time such as two hours
- Urge re training may involve pelvic tightening exercises, relaxation, or a combo approach for your individual needs
- Consider if food or beverages seem to make your bladder irritable
- Pay more attention to “letting go”, or relaxing fully while emptying your bladder
- Adjust fluid and fiber to optimize your digestion, for a happy belly and happy bladder





Medical Problems causing bladder leaks: See a health care provider for medical evaluation and care, and optimize control with Pelvic Physical Therapy as well. Become the boss of your bladder.

Find out more specifics that you can learn to control to help your bladder.

There are behavioral, lifestyle, and daily habits associated with leaks, as well as influences of nutrition, surgery, childbirth, andropause and menopause; Look for future updates monthly on Centralstationwell.com

Overactive bladders

Bladder pain syndromes

Pelvic floor muscles, are yours strong, weak, too tight, or just, right?

Post-partum bladder leaks.

Peri-menopausal, and post-menopause bladder leaks.

Prostate-related bladder problems

Curious for more information and guidance? Schedule a 15 minute “discovery call” at <http://www.centralstationwell.janeapp.com> or email us at admin@centralstationpt.blog

Want to be empowered about all facets of the pelvic floor muscles and help yourself and those you care about? Learn how your digestion effects your bladder, how your habits and exercise can help or aggravate your bladder? Get the book *The Pelvic Rehabilitation Guide Across the Lifespan*, Handspring Publishing, by Maureen Mason, discount code `MasonM15` for a 15% savings at checkout.

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