

About Stress Urinary Incontinence (SUI)



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The Official Foundation of the
American Urological Association

What is SUI and how common is it?

- Stress Urinary Incontinence (SUI) is a common medical condition involving the involuntary loss of urine that occurs when the physical forces on the bladder are increased during physical movement of the body
- Urinary leakage is a common medical condition, and about one out of every three women experience urinary incontinence
- Estimates of the number of women experiencing SUI vary widely because there is no one definition of the condition

What are the symptoms of SUI?

- Symptoms of SUI range from light leakage during rigorous activity, such as playing sports or coughing, to larger volumes of urine loss that can occur during low impact movements, such as walking or bending over
- Women can experience a spectrum of leakage, ranging from the loss of only drops of urine to tablespoons or more, depending on the severity of the SUI
- Due to the nature of these symptoms, feelings of embarrassment often prevent women from discussing the condition with their healthcare providers

Are there risk factors for development of SUI?

- SUI is more common among older women, but it may also occur among younger, active, healthy women
- Caucasian or Hispanic race, being overweight or obese, smoking and chronic cough (which places frequent strain on the pelvic floor muscles that can, in turn, cause bladder leakage) are risk factors for development of SUI
- Pregnancy and childbirth increase the chances of SUI because they may stretch, weaken or damage the pelvic floor muscles, resulting in bladder leakage
- Nerve injuries to the lower back and pelvic surgery are also potential risk factors for development of SUI because they weaken the pelvic floor muscles

What are some of the myths about SUI?

- Several common myths about SUI include:
 - *SUI is a normal part of being a woman*
 - *SUI is an inevitable part of aging – it only affects older women*
 - *Surgery is the only way to treat SUI*

How may SUI impact daily functions?

- SUI may affect day-to-day decisions about social activities, as women may be embarrassed about their bodies and hesitant to talk about urinary leakage to loved ones and friends
- SUI can affect intimate relationships and may limit sexual interaction
- Some women are only bothered by heavy or large amounts of leakage, whereas others are bothered by *any* leakage

How can women manage or treat SUI?

- There are many ways to manage or treat SUI, including lifestyle changes, urinary control devices or surgery
- Women often manage SUI by using mini pads, sanitary pads or incontinence pads

Where can women learn more about SUI?

- In an effort to eliminate the stigmas associated with SUI and provide facts about the condition, the American Urological Association (AUA) has unveiled a new Monograph (found at: www.UrologyHealth.org/SUI/find-healthcare-provider-resources.html), which serves as an educational resource for women living with this condition
 - Additionally, the website includes informative resources about SUI, patient and physician materials and an online interactive assessment tool specifically for SUI (found at: www.UrologyHealth.org)
 - AUA hopes that the information presented in the Monograph will encourage women who experience SUI to talk to their healthcare providers
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