

# 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

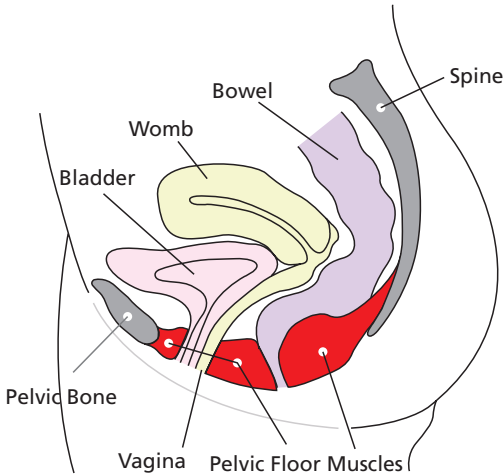
## Mixed Urinary Incontinence

A combination of stress and urge urinary incontinence

## Causes of Pelvic Floor Problems

- ▶ Pregnancy & Childbirth
- ▶ Menopause
- ▶ Constipation & Straining
- ▶ Being overweight
- ▶ Chronic cough
- ▶ Heavy lifting
- ▶ 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).