

Overactive Bladder Syndrome Overview

What is Overactive Bladder?

Millions of women experience overactive bladder syndrome (OAB). Common symptoms for OAB include urinating frequently (8 or more times a day) feeling a strong need to urinate right away, leaking urine before being able to reach a bathroom, awakening at night to urinate (more than 2 times a night). Many women also experience depression, stress and anxiety with these symptoms, as they are prevented from enjoying daily activities.

Common Overactive Bladder Causes:

- **Urinary tract infection:** can lead to urge incontinence without realizing you might have a UTI if you are not experiencing other common symptoms such as burning, blood or odor during urination.
- **Hormonal changes:** during and/or leading up to menopause estrogen levels start to decrease causing bladder and urethra muscles to weaken compromising their ability to control urinary functions.
- **Dietary choices:** certain liquids such as caffeinated drinks like soda or coffee can increase overactive bladder symptoms and often limiting the amount of these types of liquids can help to reduce or manage symptoms. Many foods can also be irritating to the bladder such as acidic or spicy foods.
- **Certain medications:** can cause side effects that lead to loss of bladder control.

Treatments for Overactive Bladder:

- **Behavioral Therapy:** is meant to help “train” your bladder so that you can avoid accidents and gain back control. By keeping a “bladder diary” logging fluid intake, number of trips to the bathroom and number of times of urine leakage you can find patterns and lifestyle changes.
- **Kegel Exercises & Biofeedback:** Kegel exercises train your pelvic muscles while biofeedback and electrical stimulation help you train muscles with Kegel exercises correctly.
- **Drug Therapy:** is used to relax bladder muscles and prevent spasms.
- **BOTOX®:** works on the bladder muscle by blocking the nerve signals that trigger your overactive bladder. BOTOX® is a different treatment option when another type of medication (anticholinergic) does not work well enough or cannot be taken.



The Women's Health Group

- **Post-Tibial Nerve Stimulation (PTNS)** is a low-risk, non-surgical treatment. PTNS works by indirectly providing electrical stimulation to the nerves responsible for bladder and pelvic floor function. During PTNS treatment, the patient's foot is comfortably elevated and supported as a slim needle electrode is placed near the nerve at the ankle known as the tibial nerve. A device known as the Urgent PC Stimulator is connected to the electrode and sends mild electrical pulses to the tibial nerve. These impulses travel to the sacral nerve plexus, the group of nerves at the base of the spine responsible for bladder function.
- **InterStim® sacral nerve stimulation (neurostimulation)** is minimally invasive and an implantable device is used and sends mild electrical pulses to the sacral nerves. Located near the tailbone, the sacral nerves control the bladder and muscles related to urinary function. If the brain and sacral nerves don't communicate correctly, the nerves can't tell the bladder to function properly. This communication problem can lead to symptoms of overactive bladder.

The Women's Health Group providers, [Stephen M. Volin, M.D.](#) and [Cindy E. Long M.D.](#) have 20 years of experience evaluating and treating urinary conditions. Both providers see a high volume of patients for all forms of urinary incontinence, including stress incontinence, urge incontinence and overactive bladder, working collaboratively, to ensure expertise and maximize best outcomes for patients.

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If you are experiencing bladder control issues, you are not alone. Millions of adults in the United States are affected by incontinence and it is very treatable.

If you have questions about symptoms you are experiencing, come see one of our specialists to discuss further and learn more about treatment options, contact us at www.whg-pc.com.