

## Pelvic Floor Exercises

Pelvic floor exercises are the best way to improve stress incontinence because they exercise the muscles around the back passage, vagina and urethra. There is a separate leaflet that explains pelvic floor exercises. Your GP, nurse, local continence specialist or physiotherapist will help you to do pelvic floor exercises.

You can do them anytime, anywhere and they are discrete so nobody will know that you are doing them!

## Surgery

Sometimes, you may need surgery to improve your stress incontinence, but this should only be considered as a last resort when every other method has been exhausted. There are several options in operations, but you should consult your doctor, and surgeon before considering this option.

Non-surgical options should always be considered before the surgical option is taken.

## **Continence Advisory Service**

If you have any queries or questions about anything in this booklet, please feel free to contact the Continence Advisory Service on 01743 444062

## **Stress Incontinence Information Leaflet**



## Stress incontinence

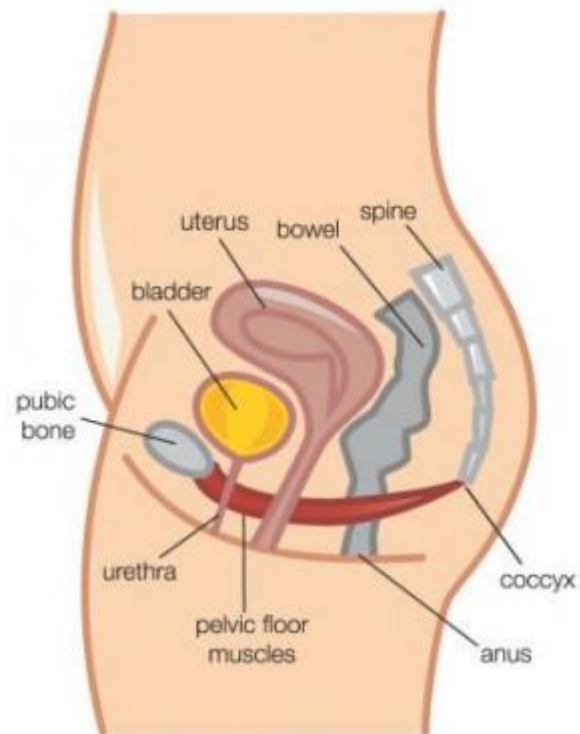
### What is stress incontinence?

Stress incontinence is when you leak urine and you are unable to stop it from occurring. This can happen when you cough, sneeze, run, jump, laugh or even when you lift heavy objects.

It is not related to emotional stress or anxiety in any way.

Physical strain and exercises causes extra pressure in the abdomen, and this put extra pressure on you bladder. The muscles which support and shut the bladder's opening will cause the muscles to not shut properly and this is what allows the urine to leak out.

The problem is more common in women, but it can also occur in men.



### Why don't the muscles work properly?

The muscles that supports and close off the bladder opening are called the pelvic floor muscles. These muscles, like any other muscle, can become weak. The most common cause of weakened pelvic floor muscles is pregnancy and childbirth, as increased pressure is exerted on these muscles for a prolonged period of time.

There are other things that cause a weakened pelvic floor, and these include having a chronic cough,

## What can I do about it?

You can do lots of things to help yourself to improve the symptoms.

If you are overweight, you should try and lose a small amount of weight as this will reduce the strain on the pelvic floor muscle.

If you have a chronic cough or constipation, you should contact your GP.

If you smoke, you should try and quit smoking.

The most important thing that you can do is exercise your pelvic floor muscles to keep the strong so they can support your bladder and its opening.

Think of it like this...A body builder doesn't get their muscles without putting in the training!