

Urinary Incontinence

Urinary incontinence is more common in women. Some 21% of the female population in Hong Kong suffers from the problem, with incidence rate increased with age. It is quite an embarrassing problem affecting patients' personal hygiene and social activities.

Continuous voluntary suppression of urination, pregnancy, menopausal hormonal disorder, treatments for uterine cancer such as resection of uterus and radioactive therapy are some of the common causes of urinary incontinence. There are three types of urinary incontinence, including stress incontinence, urge incontinence and overflow incontinence.

Depending on the type of incontinence, there are a number of treatments available. Pelvic floor exercise (Kegel exercise) is suitable for patients suffering from stress incontinence to strengthen muscles responsible for controlling urination. Surgical treatment, collagen injection into the bladder neck region and hormonal supplement are other alternatives.

Medication for urge incontinence is available, but the problem can only be tackled satisfactorily if the patients develop a good habit of bladder emptying. On the other hand, overflow incontinence patients should practise catheterization to empty their bladder regularly.

Drinking sufficient water, staying away from excessive alcoholic drinks, coffee, tea and soft drinks, and a balanced diet help to prevent urinary incontinence. Pelvic floor exercise is also suitable for pregnant women to prevent developing incontinence in future.