



Treatments work for incontinence

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(Reprinted from the Arizona Republic, "Ask the Expert" column, May 26, 2006)

Is there anything that can be done for female urinary incontinence?

Yes, there are many treatment options for female urinary incontinence that really work. The majority of female urinary incontinence can be categorized into two types: stress urinary incontinence (SUI) and urge urinary incontinence.

SUI is involuntary leaking of urine as a result of coughing, sneezing, or laughing, causing small spurts of leakage. There are many ways to treat SUI but the most common and easily tolerated is surgery. Over the past few years, the surgical treatment for SUI has changed and become much less invasive and much more durable. It is called a mid-urethral sling. The surgery is performed in the operating room and patients go home the day of surgery. Long-term rates of cure are as high as 84%.

Urge incontinence is the second most common type of urinary incontinence. As its name suggests, the involuntary leakage is preceded by the strong urge to void and usually occurs in an attempt to make it to the bathroom in time. Although there is not a surgical treatment for urge incontinence, there are many productive medical and behavioral treatments that together are 60-80% effective.

Other types of female urinary incontinence are less common, but whatever the type, there are treatment options that really work. Overall, female urinary incontinence is a pervasive problem that is more common than most will admit. In fact, more money is spent annually by women in the United States on hygiene and sanitary products for urinary incontinence than for menstruation. Although it is less embarrassing to simply purchase hygiene products and not mention it to a doctor, medical and surgical treatment is more effective and enabling than it ever was before.