



HEALTH AWARENESS

Incontinence: Understanding And Communicating

(NAPSA)—If you've ever experienced incontinence—leaking urine when you cough or sneeze or not making it to the bathroom in time—you may have hoped that the episodes would just go away. You might be keeping your condition to yourself—never talking about it, not even to a doctor.

Defined as the involuntary loss of urine, incontinence is a leading cause of nursing-home admission and can severely affect quality of life. Though long-considered a natural part of the aging process, incontinence is not normal at any age, according to leading experts, and people should seek treatment from a urologist if they are experiencing incontinent episodes.

“What’s important for patients to understand is that incontinence is no more normal for an 80-year-old than it is for a 30-year-old,” said Martin I. Resnick, M.D., president of the American Urological Association. “There are some treatments available that are very effective, but unless we know a person is suffering, we can’t treat them.”

There are three major types of incontinence: Stress incontinence, where urine is lost during activities such as sneezing, walking or coughing; urge incontinence (overactive bladder), where a person suffers from an uncontrollable urge to urinate but cannot reach the bathroom in time; and overflow incontinence, where the bladder is full yet unable to empty and merely “overflows.”

It is estimated that nearly 13 million Americans suffer from some form of incontinence, yet only about one in five seeks treatment. Incontinence is one of the most prevalent urologic diseases in this country; yet research into better treatments and cures lags behind other disease research.



People who experience incontinence should see a urologist.

“Right now, there are drugs and surgical interventions that help a significant portion of the patients urologists treat for incontinence,” Dr. Resnick said. “But however effective, these treatments are stopgap solutions. We need more research to help find a cure.”

The Coalition for Urologic Research & Education (CURE) represents tens of thousands of patients and specialty physicians, and is urging Congress to pass H.R. 1002, The Training and Research in Urology (TRU) Act. This legislation will help focus resources toward urological issues such as incontinence.

“The fear of being wet makes incontinence a 24-hour/seven-day condition,” said Cheryle Gartley, president of the Simon Foundation for Continence, a member of CURE. “If we can work for cancer cures, if we can transplant organs, then we can do something about this.”

For more information about incontinence or CURE, visit www.UrologyHealth.org.