

newsworthy trends

Debunking Myths About Incontinence

(NAPSA)—As the baby boomers reach their mid-50s, they are challenging existing norms about incontinence and driving a change in medicine, attitudes and products.

Overall, the boomer generation approaches incontinence with fewer stigmas than previous generations. This is likely due to several factors, including advertisements for medications and the prominence of absorbent products in retail stores, according to Diane Newman, RNC, MSN, CRNP, FAAN, co-director of the Penn Center for Continence and Pelvic Health at the University of Pennsylvania.

“It is also compounded by the fact that baby boomers want to be involved in their medical treatment decisions,” said Newman. Moving beyond the traditional stigma has allowed women to take an active role in controlling incontinence through behavioral modifications.

Behavioral changes include losing weight; quitting smoking; improving physical conditioning through pelvic exercises or bladder retraining; and changing diet by reducing caffeine and alcohol intake, avoiding beverages that can irritate the bladder and eating foods high in fiber.

Incontinence and overactive bladder is much more common among women than men. One in three women start experiencing incontinence when they’re pregnant, according to Newman.

Seniors and baby boomers are different in their expectations of treatment for incontinence, said W. Conrad Sweeting Jr., M.D., director of urogynecology for the Permanente Medical Group Inc. at Kaiser Medical Center in San Francisco. Boomers demand treatment, he says. Previous generations just accepted incontinence as a part of aging and had no expectations that treatment could help.



Baby boomers are demanding more and better treatments for incontinence.

“However, baby boomers are also demanding more conservative treatment options as an alternative to surgery,” said Dr. Sweeting.

In addition to behavioral modification, conservative treatments include biofeedback and implantable materials. One of the most significant factors in treatment has been the creation of urogynecology as a specialty within obstetrics and gynecology.

Boomers will also not settle for the bulky “diaper” products of 10 or 20 years ago, said Bruce Paynter, president of the Adult Care Sector for Kimberly-Clark Corporation. Boomers are looking for lifestyle-enabling, comfortable, more discreet products.

For example, Poise Pantliners are designed for light incontinence, while Depend Guards for Men are for men who may experience incontinence after prostate surgery.

A new generation of absorbent underwear is Depend Refastenable Underwear. This product provides the option of being more like underwear with the pull-on/off feature, and has the convenience of refastenability. This gives consumers a more underwear-like, clothlike, thinner, quieter product.