

# Female Urinary Incontinence

Although men can develop urinary incontinence (UI), women are twice as likely to have the problem. The most common UI are stress incontinence and **urge incontinence**.

**S**tress incontinence is losing drops while **coughing**, laughing, and **sneezing** or anything that puts pressure on the **pelvic floor** muscles. Urge incontinence, on the other hand, is losing urine for **no apparent reason**. Some medical conditions, such as multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and **stroke**, that da-

mage the nerves of the **bladder**, or **spinal cord**, may also cause urge incontinence.

Female pharmacy customer: Hello, do you speak English?

PTA: Good morning, yes I do. What can I do for you?

Is there anywhere that we can talk more privately? I am rather **embarrassed** about my problem!

Of course! We have a little back office here. If you would like to follow me. So, how may I help?

It is so embarrassing: The last few weeks, every time I laugh, sneeze or cough, I lose a few drops.

I see.

I have started wearing normal **sanitary towels** every day, but I am so **insecure** that I'm nearly afraid of going out and doing things as normal as shopping.

I have read that urinary incontinence can be very **debilitating**, especially for younger women. But I thought that only older people got it.

Not really, urinary incontinence, or UI, can happen to anyone. Do you mind me asking you a few questions?

No, not at all. I'd only be too happy to find a solution to this dreadful problem.

Do you have children?

Yes, I have four children, all girls. They are seven, five, two-and-a-half and fourteen months old, respectively.

Wow! That sounds like a handful! You said that you have been experiencing the loss of a few drops when sneezing or coughing. Does it always happen?

When I was pregnant with my last girl, I did lose a few drops every now and then, but nothing like the last couple of weeks!

And are you okay at night? I mean, you don't have any problems when you are **asleep**, do you?

No, thank goodness! Now that would be awful!

I'll just go and get a few products that might help you. Please wait here while I get them. So, here they are. We have these from the market leader I think you could start with these ones here for light to medium incontinence, and if you feel that they are not **absorbent** enough, you can go to the next ones that can take a larger volume of liquid. They look almost like normal pads! I didn't think that they were so thin!

They used to be a lot thicker, but the new ones are not only very discreet and absorbent. Would you like to try them?

Yes, please.

You might **consider** going to your gynaecologist. She'll probably **recommend** pelvic floor muscle exercises.

Thank you, I already have an **appointment**, but it's not for another two weeks. ■

*Catherine Croghan,  
Lecturer in English and native speaker*

## VOCABULARY

female urinary incontinence	Harninkontinenz bei Frauen
urge incontinence	Dranginkontinenz
coughing	Husten
sneezing	Niesen
pelvic floor	Beckenboden
no apparent reason	ohne ersichtlichen Grund
stroke	Schlaganfall
bladder	Blase
spinal cord	Rückenmark
embarrassed	verlegen, beschämt
sanitary towels	Damenbinden
insecure	verunsichert
debilitating	belastend
asleep	schlafend
absorbent	aufsaugend
consider	sich überlegen
recommend	empfehlen
appointment	Termin

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