

Types of Incontinence

Overflow Incontinence

What is it?

It is associated with a chronic urinary retention or incomplete bladder emptying. It occurs because the person is unable to fully empty their bladder. This can be evidenced by a bladder scan showing a large amount of urine in the bladder after voiding.

Symptoms

It is characterised by the involuntary release of urine from an overfull bladder, often in the absence of any urge to urinate. The leakage, which can cause embarrassment and discomfort, is not always the only problem. They may pass frequent small trickles of urine (weak flow and dribbling). It may also feel as though the bladder is never fully empty (incomplete emptying) and the person may not be able to empty their bladder even when they try, resulting in having to strain to start their flow. The person may or may not sense that their bladder is full. Urine left in the bladder is a breeding ground for bacteria and this can lead to repeated urinary tract infections.

What treatment is available?

- If you suspect that an individual might have overflow incontinence a bladder scan will help with diagnosis.
- Symptoms may be eased by taking time to sit on the toilet, avoiding distractions when using the toilet and practicing double voiding technique.
- Avoiding constipation will help.
- Review medications – is the individual taking medications with an anti-muscurinic effect?

See Advice Leaflets: -

- Successful Bladder Emptying
- Constipation and Laxatives
- Gastro-colic Reflex
- Medication Impact on the Bladder

See also: -

NICE Clinical Guidance - Urinary Incontinence in Women: Management

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg171>

NICE Clinical Guidance – Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms in Men: Management

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg97>