

# Optimizing Health for Women of All Ages

## Urology & Continence Center at Memorial Hermann - Texas Medical Center

If you suffer from urinary incontinence and have learned to accept it as just another part of getting older, you should know that you don't have to endure this condition any longer. Urinary incontinence affects as many as 40 percent of women over the age of 60, but many never seek treatment.

"So many women assume that incontinence is just a part of aging, or think that because their mother or grandmother had it, they will, too," says Gazala Siddiqui, M.D., a Urogynecologist on staff at the Urology & Continence Center at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center and Assistant Professor Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences at The University of Texas Medical School at Houston. "While incontinence does affect a certain number of women after childbearing or menopause, it is completely treatable and curable. I encourage every woman with this problem to see a health care provider."

Incontinence is the involuntary leakage of urine. Stress incontinence occurs during activities that increase pressure on the abdomen, including coughing, sneezing and jogging. Overactive bladder incontinence is characterized by a feeling of urgency, usually with high frequency.

### What are Kegel exercises?

Kegel exercises are the repeated contraction and release of the pelvic muscles to increase the muscles supporting the bladder, urethra and other pelvic organs. They can be done anytime and anywhere, and can significantly improve incontinence and prolapse disorders.

### What is Prolapse?

Prolapse occurs when the pelvic organs are not well supported, which may create a vaginal bulge.



Dr. Siddiqui and the team of experts at the Urology & Continence Center at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center are expertly trained in the treatment of disorders affecting mature women, including incontinence and prolapse. "Women don't have to live with these conditions," says Dr. Siddiqui. "After treatment, most of my patients say their only regret is that they didn't seek help sooner."

Dr. Siddiqui recommends that patients with overactive bladder incontinence make some behavior modifications, including cutting down on caffeine consumption, using the bathroom before leaving home and doing Kegel exercises regularly. "Beyond that, overactive bladder is usually treated with medication," she says. "The newest generation of medications for this condition have minimal side effects and are quite effective." Another treatment option for overactive bladders is Botox. "This is a good option for patients who can't tolerate the side-effects of prescribed medications," says Ouida L. Westney, M.D., a Urologist specializing in female incontinence at the Urology & Continence Center and Associate Professor of Surgery, Division of Urology at The University of Texas Medical School at Houston.

Kegel exercises also help with stress incontinence, and surgery is another option. "The surgery is minimally invasive and it's an outpatient procedure," Dr. Siddiqui explains. "Patients require only two weeks of recovery time — sometimes even less."

Women who are experiencing prolapse can also benefit from treatment at the Urology & Continence Center at Memorial Hermann-TMC. "Many older patients with prolapse wait to see a doctor until the condition becomes serious," says Dr. Siddiqui, "but I encourage women not to wait."

Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center, the flagship of the 16 hospital Memorial Hermann system, has been providing patient-centered care to the greater Houston area for 100 years. The hospital's Urology and Continence Center, one of the top-ranked facilities of its kind in the country, provides urology treatment to patients of all ages.

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