

URINARY INCONTINENCE

❖ This pamphlet has been designed by the health care professionals of Marquette General Hospital to give you information about urinary incontinence (leakage of urine). After you have finished reading this pamphlet you should be able to discuss:

- stress incontinence and urgency incontinence.
- common methods used in evaluating urinary incontinence.
- the programs for both stress and urgency incontinence.

➤ URINARY INCONTINENCE

❖ Urinary incontinence (leakage of urine) is not a life threatening disease, but it can be embarrassing and very inconvenient.

❖ **Stress incontinence**- the sudden loss of urine with movement either by standing, coughing, sneezing, or jumping. This is due to a bladder position problem, or weak support of the bladder.

❖ **Urgency incontinence**- an almost irresistible urge to urinate with a loss of urine when a bladder muscle contracts suddenly and very unexpectedly.

❖ **Mixed urinary incontinence**- a combination of both stress and urgency incontinence is common.

❖ Causes of urinary incontinence are urinary tract infection, fatigue, confusion, diabetes, depression, Parkinson's disease, stroke, spinal cord injury, cancer of the bladder, prostate enlargement and medications.

❖ If you leak urine and are tired of being inconvenienced and embarrassed, it is time to see your family doctor and urologist.

➤ EVALUATION BY YOUR DOCTOR

- ❖ Urinary incontinence can be diagnosed/evaluated through an examination. Stress incontinence can be corrected by surgery, urgency incontinence cannot.
- ❖ Common methods of evaluating urinary incontinence include:
 - detailed medical history.
 - physical exam.
 - urine testing.
 - bladder and kidney x-rays/
 - Cystoscopy (viewing the inside of the bladder).
 - Urodynamic studies (bladder function tests).

➤ **CONTROLLING YOUR INCONTINENCE**

- ❖ Your doctor will recommend a program that is right for you. The four most common programs are:
 - Double voiding- each time you empty your bladder, wait one minute, then try to urinate again. Any remaining urine will be voided.
 - Void by the clock- urinate every two hours during the day and at least once during the night. Urinate immediately after awaking in the morning and just before you go to bed at night.
 - Sphincter exercises- tighten and relax muscles in the perineum 200-300 times, three times daily to strengthen bladder muscles. Practice starting to urinate and then trying to stop before you have emptied your bladder. Try to do this each time you go to the bathroom to urinate, this will help strengthen your muscles/
 - If you sit while urinating, urinate with your knees spread apart 12-24 inches. This may allow the bladder to empty more completely by relieving any pressure on the urethra.

- ❖ Your special program may or may not include medications to help control leakage.