

Nonsurgical treatments suggested for women's urinary incontinence

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Pelvic muscle exercises, bladder training and weight loss can help, doctors say.

(HealthDay)—Effective treatment options exist for women with urinary incontinence that don't involve medication or surgery, according to new guidelines from the American College of Physicians.

Exercises to strengthen the [pelvic floor muscles](#), bladder training and [weight loss](#) could help, the group advised.

Women with [stress urinary incontinence](#) have problems holding in urine when they laugh, cough or sneeze. The college recommends that these women perform Kegel exercises to strengthen the muscles that control urine flow.

Urgency urinary incontinence causes women to suddenly feel the need to urinate and leak urine for no apparent reason. The physicians said bladder training can help women with this form of the condition. This

behavioral therapy involves going to the bathroom on a set schedule and slowly increasing the intervals between urination over time.

Women with more than one form of urinary incontinence can try a combination of Kegel exercises and bladder training, according to the guidelines published Sept. 15 in *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

If bladder training isn't effective, doctors should prescribe a medication based on a woman's individual needs and how well she tolerates the drug, the physicians said.

Also, the symptoms of obese women with urinary incontinence may improve with weight loss and exercise, the guidelines noted.

Statistics show that [urinary incontinence](#) increases with age, affecting up to 57 percent of women between 40 and 60 years old, and three-quarters of women 75 and older. Experts suggest that many more [women](#) may have the condition but remain undiagnosed because they haven't reported their symptoms to their doctor.

More information: The U.S. National Kidney and Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse has more about [urinary incontinence in women](#).

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