

HEALTH BYTES

INCONTINENCE CAN AFFECT YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE

One in three women in Europe are affected by urinary incontinence, according to a quality of life study conducted by new Always Discreet manufacturers, Proctor & Gamble.

They are not just elderly women and most people don't talk about this problem, which can involve fear of wetting themselves when they cough, laugh, dance, run or lift objects or weights.

It is caused by weak pelvic floor muscles and can often occur after childbirth, menopause or during strenuous exercise. Weight gain can also trigger it. 49% of the women interviewed for this study said they feel depressed as a result of their condition. 63% of women experiencing bladder sensitivity suffer from disturbed sleep patterns because of having to get up to go to the toilet at night.

"So many women suffer in silence," says GP Dr Sarah Jarvis, "and adult incontinence seems to be one of the last taboos in our society."

33% of the women surveyed said it affected intimacy with their partners and 63% were afraid they might smell.

Over half of women are not using a product designed for sensitive bladder, Dr Jarvis says.

"Many compromise with sanitary pads. They don't always realise that there are the right products out there that offer the comfort and protection women need to live life to the full."

Nine years of research and product testing went into developing new Always Discreet for sensitive bladders. The range includes liners and pads that are thinner (up to 40%) than the leading brand. They also absorb two times more than women may need. Odour neutralisation is another feature.

"Bladder sensitivity is common," says Carla Berry of Always. "This new product provides a discreet and feminine solution that women can trust from the moment they pick it off the shelf, right through to subtle disposal."

Want to try them yourself? To order a free sample, visit www.alwaysdiscreet.co.uk. The range is available in shops, selling at €3.11 for the liners and €3.90 for the pads.

TOP TIPS

GP and Always Discreet ambassador Dr Sarah Jarvis has these tips for taking care of your sensitive bladder.

- 1 KEEP MOVING:** Low-impact sports such as cycling, yoga or Nordic walking are

ideal activities to keep you fit without affecting your sensitive bladder condition.

2 NOT TOO MANY CRUNCHES:

Abdominal workouts like sit-ups, crunches or plank kicks place a lot of pressure on your pelvic floor. Opt for alternative exercises where breathing or your position supports your pelvic floor. Pelvic floor exercises and targeted pilates and yoga exercises can be particularly helpful.

3 PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISES:

By practicing at least three times a day, these exercises can help you strengthen your pelvic floor muscles and give you more control when you need it. If you're not sure how to do them, speak to your doctor or visit www.alwaysdiscreet.co.uk

4 DRINK JUST ENOUGH:

There's no need to avoid drinking in order to reduce the urge to visit the bathroom. Limiting your water intake makes your urine more concentrated, which boost your chances of bladder irritation. Keep hydrated.

5 NO HEAVY LIFTING: Lifting heavy objects is really bad for the pelvic floor and your back. Ask for help.**6 BYE, BYE BARISTA:** Try limiting coffees, teas and fizzy drinks for a week or two to see if it helps – they can irritate a sensitive bladder.**7 SET A SCHEDULE:** Your bladder is trainable. If you're troubled by needing to pass water very often and needing to rush to the toilet, talk with your doctor about a daily schedule to build up your bladder's holding capacity. Remember, allow your bladder to empty completely each time you go to the toilet.**8 STAY COMFORTABLE & PROTECTED:**

Wear a product that has the right protection for you.

DUCHENNE AWARENESS DAY

7 September 2014

107 children in Ireland with this progressive muscle-weakening condition. There is no cure at present but new drugs are being developed.

See www.worldduchenneawarenessday.org Duchenne children in Ireland, via their parents, are asking for your help to improve access to specialised medical care and facilities and increase awareness. See www.duchenne.ie

To jump or not?



www.fionahoban.ie

If you think humans are crazy, wait 'til you hear this one about frogs, writes Fiona Hoban

Apparently, if you drop a frog into boiling water it immediately jumps out. However, if you put a frog in a pot of room-temperature water and then bring the water to a boil very, very slowly, the frog will stay in the water until it dies.

Why doesn't the frog jump? It seems unlikely that he's unaware of the slowly rising temperature. Maybe he stays put because he fears what awaits him once he jumps. Maybe he stays put because he's hoping the water temperature will improve miraculously, all by itself. Maybe he stays put because he has himself convinced that if he sits there and bides his time he'll muster the energy and courage and motivation to just do it – to just jump. But for whatever reason, the frog doesn't jump.

Thankfully, we humans would never be so stupid. We would never ignore a situation that was slowly getting worse. We would never stay in a job, marriage or friendship even though it was slowly killing us. We would never stand idly by while

things slowly went down the pan.

We would never allow the pounds to pile on bit by bit (and then stare in horror at a chance photo taken and say, "I didn't think I was that bad"). We would never keep sucking on cancer sticks, ignoring the coughing, the wheezing and the concerns of others around us.

We would never ignore health warnings about excessive drinking ("I enjoy a few drinks" – a "few" is three. When was the last time you stopped at three?). Hmmm, Augustine's quote comes to mind: "Lord make me pure, but not yet."

And then there are those among us who jump out of the water, not because the temperature's rising but because we fear that it might start to rise. How many of us have jumped out of perfectly tepid water for fear it might boil at some stage in the future?

The saying goes: "Jump and the net will appear". But there's another saying, equally as valid: "Out of the frying pan and into the pan."

But getting back to poor ol' Kermie. I'd imagine that if you asked his mother what killed her darling son, she would say: "The boiling water." Is it not more accurate to say that it was his decision not to jump out of the boiling water that ultimately killed him?

To jump or not to jump, that is the question (it is also our decision and responsibility). **CL**

