URINARY INCONTINENCE - FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ELDERLY
What is Urinary Incontinence?

- Urinary Incontinence (UI) is referred to the problem of loss of bladder control.

- In simpler terms, Urinary Incontinence (UI), is the involuntarily leakage of urine.

- Urinary Incontinence (UI) is not a disease, rather it is a symptom. It can be the result of everyday habits, underlying physical problems or medical conditions.

- During elderly years, males or females are liable to develop Urinary Incontinence (UI).

- The severity ranges from occasionally leaking urine when coughing or sneezing to having an urge to urinate that's so sudden and strong you don't get to a toilet in time.
Types of Urinary Incontinence

The different types of Urinary Incontinence may be summarized as under:

- **Functional Incontinence:** When the patient fails to reach out the toilet in time because of mobility issues or unacquainted surroundings.

- **Stress Incontinence:** When the patient urinates involuntarily due to exertion or pressure caused by certain activities like sneezing or coughing.

- **Urge Incontinence:** When the patient experiences an unstoppable urge or desire to urinate that cannot be deferred at all.

- **Mixed Incontinence:** When the patient urinates involuntarily due to all sorts of mixed reasons ranging from urgency to exertion or even urge.
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- **Overactive Bladder Syndrome**: When the patient urinates involuntarily that is mainly caused with or without urge and generally with frequency as well as nocturia.

- **Overflow Incontinence**: When the patient experiences chronic bladder outflow obstruction, that is mainly caused due to prostatic diseases (generally seen in men).

- **True Incontinence**: When the patient urinates involuntarily due to a fistulous track present between the vagina and the ureter or bladder or urethra.
General Risk Factors for Urinary Incontinence

Urinary incontinence (UI) can be caused by everyday habits, underlying medical conditions or physical problems. A thorough evaluation by the doctor can help determine what's behind the incontinence. The general risk factors for Urinary Incontinence (UI) include:

- **Diet:** The diet of a person can be an attribute for Urinary Incontinence to quite an extent. Alcohol, caffeine, carbonated drinks, artificial sweeteners and foods rich in spice, sugar or acids should be avoided to the best extent possible as these act as diuretics or triggers for more urine production, thereby leading to Urinary Incontinence for many.

- **Diabetes:** Diabetes gives rise to the sensation of frequent urination. This is due to the fact that excess glucose that builds up in a person's bloodstream causes the fluids to be pulled out from the tissues, thereby leaving a person thirsty and making him or her drink lots of water. This results in more than normal urination, thereby leading to Urinary Incontinence.

- **Cognitive Impaired Mobility:** Cognitive Impaired Mobility makes a person bed-ridden and unable to move from one place to another, thereby giving rise to problems of Urinary Incontinence.
Specific Risk Factors for Elderly Incontinence

It is a fact that although Urinary Incontinence (UI) can happen at any age, it is more likely found in the older age group. It has been witnessed that one out of every five individuals suffer from Urinary Incontinence (UI). This may be caused due to any of the following factors:

- **Inflamed bladder wall** - With the onset of the aged years, the bladder wall of most people tends to increase, thereby weakening the bladder control and causing Urinary Incontinence.

- **Side effect of certain diseases** - Certain diseases like Multiple Sclerosis and Alzheimer's disease that occur in the aged years of a person's life can bring about side effects like Urinary Incontinence.

- **Gender based problems of age** - Problems of Prostate in elderly men and Menopause in elderly women can cause Urinary Incontinence.
When to see a Doctor...

A patient might feel uncomfortable discussing incontinence with a doctor. But if incontinence is frequent or is affecting the quality of life, it's important to seek medical advice because urinary incontinence may:

- Indicate a more serious underlying condition
- Cause to restrict the patient's activities and limit his or her social interactions
- Increase the risk of falls in older adults as they rush to the toilet
Thank You!