

# HOW I PRACTICE: SCREENING FOR URINARY INCONTINENCE

SANDI TENFELDE, PHD, RN, APRN

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO, MARCELLA NIEHOFF SCHOOL OF NURSING

WSPi DISSEMINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION STEERING COMMITTEE (DISC)



## DISCLAIMER

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# OVERVIEW OF THE ISSUE: URINARY INCONTINENCE (UI)

- UI is more common among women than men
- Nearly half of all women in the United States suffer from UI
- UI results in considerable psychological, social, and economic burden
- UI adversely affects women's health
- Many women suffer in silence due to underreporting
- Early detection of symptoms may lead to interventions that can reduce the severity and improve quality of life

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# WPSI RECOMMENDATION: SCREENING FOR URINARY INCONTINENCE

The WPSI recommends screening women for urinary incontinence annually. Screening ideally should assess whether women experience urinary incontinence and whether it affects their activities and quality of life. The WPSI recommends referring women for further evaluation and treatment if indicated.

## HOW I PRACTICE

- Recognize patient's level of comfort when asking sensitive questions about pelvic floor health
- Making UI screening questions a standard review of systems for all annual exams
- Begin asking about menstrual history and ease your way into the more sensitive questions about incontinence and sexual health
- Ask normalizing questions like: “Many women notice that they occasionally leak urine on accident. Has this ever happened to you?”
  - If they respond yes, consider determining how often these symptoms occur and if they have urgency, stress or mixed urinary incontinence.
- Important that the patient is asked in a non-judgmental and compassionate manner

# RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- 3- Incontinence Questions  
<https://www.racgp.org.au/getattachment/1bd242ff-e656-4fa3-8b36-b51f7cc57706/Appendix-13A.pdf.aspx>
- Michigan Incontinence Symptom Index (MISI)  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3925248/>
- Pelvic floor physical therapists locator:  
<https://pelvicrehab.com/>
- O'Reilly, N., Nelson, H. D., Conry, J. M., Frost, J., Gregory, K. D., Kendig, S. M., Phipps, M., Salganicoff, A., Ramos, D., Zahn, C., Qaseem, A., & Women's Preventive Services Initiative (2018). Screening for Urinary Incontinence in Women: A Recommendation From the Women's Preventive Services Initiative. *Annals of internal medicine*, 169(5), 320–328. <https://doi.org/10.7326/M18-0595>
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- Validated screening tools can be incorporated into clinical practice.