

OASIS Alert

OASIS Basics: UNDERSTAND INCONTINENCE BEFORE YOU ASSESS IT

Incontinence is a frequent issue in the home setting, but the types and causes vary widely. There are four main types of incontinence, according to the Charleston, SC-based **National Association For Continence**. These are:

- 1. Stress incontinence.** This occurs when pelvic muscles are weak or damaged, causing the bladder to leak during exercise, coughing, sneezing, laughing or any body movement that puts pressure on the bladder.
- 2. Urge incontinence.** Here the patient feels an urgent need to pass urine and is unable to get to the bathroom in time. This happens when nerve pathways between the bladder and the brain are damaged, causing sudden bladder contractions that can't be controlled or inhibited.
- 3. Mixed incontinence.** Frequently patients have both stress and urge incontinence. Symptoms of one type may be more troublesome than those of the other.
- 4. Overflow incontinence.** In this type, the quantity of urine produced exceeds the bladder's holding capacity, for example in diabetes or spinal cord injury.

When To Expect Incontinence

Some of the causes of incontinence are urinary tract infections, congestive heart failure, diabetes, pedal edema, dementia or other cognitive impairments, obesity, fecal impaction, severe diarrhea, multiple sclerosis, multiple childbirth, radical prostatectomy, shingles, tumors or various surgical procedures.

Note: The NAFC is at www.nafc.org.