

Urethral Instability

What Is It?

A urethra that functions normally maintains a constant, stable pressure to stay closed until it is time to urinate. During urination, the urethra relaxes to allow urine to pass. An unstable urethra relaxes sporadically, when it is not supposed to, causing an unpredictable urge to urinate with or without urine loss.

What Causes It?

The cause of urethral instability is unknown. It is believed to be caused by nerve and/or pelvic floor muscle dysfunction.

Symptoms:

- Urinary urgency
- Urinary frequency
- Involuntary urine loss with or without a sense of urgency

Treatment Options:

- **Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy** - Pelvic floor physical therapy includes a regimen of four or more visits with a female physical therapist with specialized training in treating urinary problems. She will use high-frequency functional electrical stimulation and other techniques to address your urethral instability. Functional electrical stimulation involves the use of a vaginal probe to deliver a gentle, painless electrical current to help pelvic nerves function correctly.
- **Medications** – overactive bladder medications may help in some cases.
- **InterStim™ Therapy** – A “pacemaker” for the bladder is surgically implanted beneath the skin to help the nerves that control the urethra to function more normally. This is available if other treatment options are ineffective.

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