

# Voiding Dysfunction

## What Is It?

Voiding dysfunction occurs when there is a lack of coordination between the bladder muscle (detrusor) and the urethra. With normal urination, the urethra relaxes and opens when the bladder muscle contracts allowing urine to pass out of the body freely. In those with voiding dysfunction, the urethra does not relax when the bladder muscle contracts making it difficult for urine to pass.

## What Causes It?

Voiding dysfunction is caused by nerve dysfunction or non-relaxing pelvic floor muscles or both. If the problem stems from a neurological disorder or spinal cord injury it is called “detrusor-sphincter dyssynergia”. If no neurological disorder or injury is present, it is referred to as “pseudodyssynergia”.

## Symptoms:

- Difficulty emptying the bladder
- Urinary hesitancy
- Slow or weak urine stream
- Urinary urgency and/or frequency
- Dribbling urine after urination is complete

## Treatment Options:

- **Pelvic Floor Therapy** – a variety of techniques are used to re-educate the nerves and muscles that control the urethra.
- **Intermittent Self-Catheterization** – you regularly insert a catheter into your urethra to empty the bladder more completely. This is an option if urinary retention is present.
- **Medications** – muscle relaxants can be used temporarily, if urinary retention is severe.
- **InterStim™ Therapy** – A “pacemaker” for the bladder is surgically implanted beneath the skin to help the nerves that control the bladder and urethra to function more normally. This is available if other treatment options are ineffective.

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