

## Overview

Urinary control relies on the finely coordinated activities of the smooth muscle tissue of the urethra and bladder, skeletal muscle, voluntary inhibition, and the autonomic nervous system.

Urinary incontinence can result from anatomic, physiologic, or pathologic (disease) factors. Congenital and acquired disorders of muscle innervation (e.g., ALS, spina bifida, multiple sclerosis) eventually cause inadequate urinary storage or control.

Acute and temporary incontinence are commonly caused by the following:

Childbirth

Limited mobility

Medication side effect

Urinary tract infection

Chronic incontinence is commonly caused by these factors:

Birth defects

Bladder muscle weakness

Blocked urethra (due to benign prostate hyperplasia, tumor, etc.)

Brain or spinal cord injury

Nerve disorders

Pelvic floor muscle weakness

Vaginal prolapse

## Incidence and Prevalence

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported in 1996 that approximately 13 million people in the United States suffer from urinary incontinence. The condition is far more prevalent in women than men. In the general population aged 15 to 64 years old, 10-30% of women versus 1.5-5% of men are affected. At least 50% of nursing home residents are affected. Of that number, 70% are women.