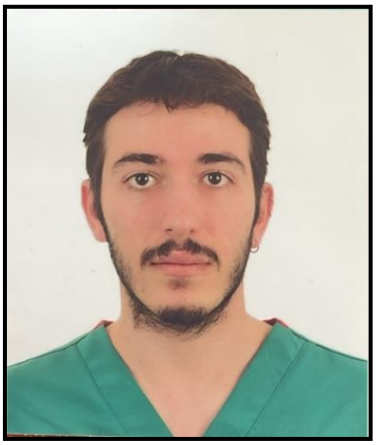
PATIENT EDUCATION FORMS



Turkish translation: Dr. Ege ÖZGÜR

University of Health Sciences, Haydarpaşa Numune Training and Research Hospital, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology

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Urinary Incontinence

Pelvic Floor (Kegel) Exercises

Surgery to Treat Stress Incontinence in Women

Treatments for Urge Incontinence in Women

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Patient Education: Surgery for Stress Incontinence in Women (The Basics)

What is surgery for stress incontinence in women? — Surgery is a treatment for women with a condition called "stress incontinence." People with this condition leak urine when they laugh, cough, sneeze, or do anything that puts pressure on the abdomen.

There are other treatments for stress incontinence besides surgery. But if these treatments do not work well or you do not want to try them, you may consider surgery.

How do doctors perform surgery to treat stress incontinence in women? — Most surgeries to treat stress incontinence in women are "minimally invasive" surgeries. This involves the doctor making smaller cuts than in normal surgery and using small instruments controlled from outside the body. However, doctors can also perform "open" surgery. This involves making large cuts to operate on the body.

Are there different types of surgery to treat stress incontinence? — Yes, there are many types. These include:

- "Sling procedure" – A sling is a small piece of material placed around the urethra. (The urethra is the tube that carries urine out of the body.) There are different types of slings, but they all provide support to prevent the urethra from leaking urine. The sling can be made of synthetic mesh or tissue taken from the woman's body.
- "Burch procedure" or "retropubic colposuspension" – In this procedure, the doctor attaches the tissue around the urethra to strong bands inside the abdomen. This procedure can be "minimally invasive" surgery (a few small cuts) or "open" surgery (a large cut).
- Injection of material (needle) next to the urethra – The material thickens the area around the urethra. This helps support the urethra and prevent urine leakage. This treatment is often suitable for women who have had surgery and is usually done in a doctor's office.

What are the benefits of surgery? — The main benefit is treating stress incontinence that other treatments have not improved.

What are the risks of surgery? — The risks of surgery vary depending on:

- The type of surgery you have
- Your age and overall health

The risks of surgery include:

- Problems from surgery, such as bleeding, infection, or a tear in the bladder
- Trouble emptying the bladder completely when urinating
- Stress incontinence after surgery – Some women may still have stress incontinence after surgery.
- Urge incontinence, also called "overactive bladder syndrome" – This usually means a constant feeling of needing to urinate or an urgent need to urinate. Some people may also leak urine if they can't reach the toilet in time. This can occur after surgery or worsen in those who had it before surgery.
- Pain during sexual intercourse
- Groin pain – This is the area where the thigh meets the rest of the body.

Are there other options besides surgery for stress incontinence? — Yes, there are other options. These include exercises or a device called a pessary ring, which is used in the vagina daily to support the urethra. Most women try other options first and consider surgery if other treatments do not work.

An important point to remember is that the results of surgery to treat stress incontinence vary for each woman. You are the only person who can decide if surgery is the best treatment for you. If you are unsure, you may want to try other treatments while considering surgery. Talk to your doctor about how much surgery might help.

What should I do if I want to become pregnant? — Doctors usually do not perform surgery to treat stress incontinence in women who want to become pregnant. This is because pregnancy puts stress on the abdomen and urinary tract, which can cause stress incontinence to return even after surgery.