

Urinary incontinence in pregnancy

You may feel the need to pee often during early pregnancy. This may continue up to 18 weeks into pregnancy, and sometimes after 30 weeks.

Increased fluid levels within your body and the added pressure from your baby on your bladder will make you need to pee more often.

Urinary incontinence is when you leak pee.

Hormonal changes in pregnancy can also cause your pelvic floor muscles to become more relaxed. This can sometimes cause you to leak pee when you laugh, cough, sneeze or exercise. Squeezing your pelvic floor when you feel this is about to happen can help (called 'the knack').

Pelvic floor muscle training will help your body cope with the growing weight of the baby.

[How to do pelvic floor exercises](#)

Bladder control and pelvic floor muscles

Going to the bathroom a lot can be annoying. But it is important for you and your baby that you drink plenty of fluids every day.

When you are pregnant you should drink lots of water to stay hydrated. Your pee should be a pale yellow. You may be not drinking enough water if your pee is dark or foul smelling.

Drinks with caffeine in them can also irritate your bladder, making you pee more. Drinking or eating high levels of caffeine during pregnancy is not safe for your baby.

[Caffeine during pregnancy](#)

Pelvic floor exercises

If your pelvic floor muscles are weak, you may have problems with bladder or bowel control and supporting your pelvic organs.

Pelvic floor exercises help strengthen your pelvic floor muscles. Muscles that are healthy and fit before the baby is born can reduce the likelihood of urinary incontinence after childbirth.

When to get medical help

If leaking pee is a problem for you, your GP or midwife can refer you to a physiotherapist who specialises in women's health.

A specialist physiotherapist can create a treatment programme for you.

Talk to your GP, obstetrician or midwife if you have:

- stinging, pain, or burning when you are passing urine
- [a high temperature](#)
- an ache in your lower back that is not helped by rest
- any fluid leaking from your vagina
- smelly or unusual [discharge from your vagina](#)

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