Oops…I just leaked!
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Has this ever happened to you? Have you been with your friends laughing and then, all of a sudden, oops you have leaked. Or have you been fumbling with your keys to open the door then oops you have leaked. Did you know this is a common diagnosis called urinary incontinence and it effects13 million Americans? Eighty percent of these cases can be cured or improved. So what can you do about it?

First let's understand the types of urinary incontinence. The first type is called stress incontinence which is the loss of urine when pressure is exerted on your bladder. This often occurs during coughing, sneezing, bending over, or lifting. It is most common in women during pregnancy, after childbirth, or during menopause and in men after removal of the prostate gland.

The second type of incontinence is called urge. This is when a sudden, intense urge to urinate occurs and urine involuntarily releases. It is often referred to as overactive bladder syndrome. It can occur due to a urinary tract infection, bowel problems, or from damage to the nervous system.

 As we age, our bladders can shrink and the pelvic floor muscles, which control urinary function, can weaken. This results in a decreased ability to maintain continence.

To decrease incontinence there are a couple of things that you can do. Walking is one of the best ways to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles. The recommendation is to walk 30 minutes a day. Another way, of course, is the famous kegel exercise. However did you know that 40% of people do it incorrectly? To perform a kegel correctly you want to imagine that you are stopping urine, stopping gas and pulling the pelvic floor muscle up and in. The American Urogynecologic Society recommends doing three sets of ten contractions twice a day. These should be performed quickly (2 second contractions) and slowly (10 second contractions).

So, by performing three sets of ten kegels and walking 30 minutes a day you will keep your oops and leaks away.