Common Myths About Urinary Incontinence

While urinary incontinence affects approximately 25 million Americans, the condition rarely gets the discussion it deserves. Due to this lack of open communication about the disorder, many older adults, and the individuals who care for them, have misconceptions about urinary incontinence that can interfere with treatment and management.

The following are several incontinence myths and the truth behind them.

**MYTH:** Urinary incontinence is inevitable with age.

While aging does increase the risk for incontinence, many elderly individuals maintain normal bladder control, so it should not be considered a normal or inevitable part of the aging process.

**MYTH:** Urinary incontinence cannot be treated in older adults.

This is not the case in most instances. There are ways that incontinence can be treated successfully.
MYTH: Drinking as little water as possible will improve incontinence.

Often older adults limit their fluid intake in the mistaken belief that drinking less will lessen the severity of their incontinence. However, limiting fluids leads to more concentrated urine which irritates the bladder and makes the problem worse. Drinking adequate fluids helps to maintain a normal bladder capacity and function.

MYTH: Urinary incontinence is rarely a problem for men.

Men are less likely to discuss the issue with family members or doctors, and so are less likely to be diagnosed with urinary incontinence. However, according to NAFC estimates, about 20% - 25% of Americans with incontinence are men.

MYTH: The person with incontinence has accidents on purpose.

Busy or stressed caregivers may think that their loved one is having accidents on purpose, but more likely, when an older adult has an accident, it is due to an inability to make it to the bathroom in time or memory loss issues.

MYTH: Incontinence is embarrassing, but not serious.

While incontinence itself is not life-threatening, it can be a very uncomfortable condition for older adults that can inhibit the desire to leave the house or socialize with others, and such isolation can contribute to depression. Additionally, frequent trips to the bathroom can increase an elderly person’s risk for dangerous falls.

MYTH: Absorbent products are the only option to manage urinary incontinence.

Absorbent products may be the most appropriate management strategy for some people, but they’re not the only option. Bladder training, or timed and caregiver-prompted voiding, has also been shown to be an effective incontinence management strategy.

Aker Kasten Home Health Care can assist seniors with sensitive bladders through meal preparation, dietary education, helpful reminders and more. In addition, our caregivers are trained to recognize and report the early signs of a urinary tract infection that might otherwise go unnoticed and lead to serious complications. Contact Aker Kasten Home Health Care to learn more about how in-home care can benefit your loved one.

Sources: National Association for Continence, Health Magazine