

Weight loss reduces incontinence for women

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Starting a weight-loss regimen significantly reduces urinary incontinence for women, according to researchers at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) and the University of California, San Francisco.

A six-month program of diet, exercise and behavior modification resulted in a loss of 17 pounds and nearly one-half (47 percent) fewer incontinence episodes per week on average, the study authors said.

By contrast, an information-only program on diet and exercise without any direct weight-loss training led to a loss of 3 pounds and 28 percent fewer incontinence episodes per week on average, the researchers said.

The results are published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

"Earlier research has shown that behavioral weight-loss programs have many benefits, including decreasing blood pressure and helping to fight off diabetes. Here we've shown that weight loss has measureable impact on reduced incontinence," said Frank Franklin, M.D., Ph.D., a UAB professor in the School of Public Health and a co-author on the *NEJM* study.

The *NEJM* results are from the Program to Reduce Incontinence by Diet and Exercise, or PRIDE study. It included 338 overweight and obese women (BMI 25-30 kg/m²) who experienced up to 10 episodes of incontinence per week.

Those on the diet, exercise and behavior modification program reported

feeling significantly more satisfied with the improvements in incontinence compared to the information-only participants, Franklin said.

Urinary incontinence affects more than 13 million women in the United States and has been linked to increased risk of falls and bone fractures.

Considering the PRIDE results and other health benefits, the initiation of weight loss should be added as a first-line treatment in overweight and obese women, said lead study author Leslee Subak, M.D., of the University of California, San Francisco.

Source: University of Alabama at Birmingham

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