

# Health Awareness

## Overactive Bladder Is Treatable, Ⓢ Not An Inevitable, Embarrassing Aspect Of Aging

(NAPSA)—A rarely discussed medical condition afflicts roughly one in six Americans. Many incorrectly accept it as an inevitable part of aging.

Overactive bladder (OAB) affects about 33 million Americans. Its symptoms, including frequent, sudden urges to urinate and wetting accidents, can worsen until individuals find their day-to-day activities compromised. Although treatable, OAB remains highly undertreated.

Research shows that embarrassment and stigma associated with OAB may cause sufferers to hide or deny it. Unfortunately, this often only makes matters worse, since people may delay or avoid the very treatment that could help them.

OAB may affect not only the sufferer, but also his or her interactions with family and loved ones. Sufferers may worry that their symptoms inconvenience or otherwise create difficulties for others. A recent study that looked at the impact of OAB on family members found that urinary frequency was the symptom that bothered them the most. Interestingly, it is the fear of urgency incontinence that leads people with OAB to urinate more frequently than they might otherwise.

“Someone with OAB might avoid social situations with their families, or skip long car rides or activities without access to a bathroom,” said Diane Newman, RNC MSN, CRNP FAAN, BCIA-PMDB, co-director, Penn Center for Continence and Pelvic Health, University of Pennsylvania Medical Center.

Getting help can start with a discussion with the doctor about symptoms and available treatments. Options may include prescription medicines along with a program of behavioral changes. People who suffer with OAB symptoms should be sure to explain to the doctor how their symptoms affect them and their family.

While OAB may sometimes be a difficult subject to talk about, possible “conversation starters” to use with a physician include:

- “I find myself worrying when my next accident will happen.”
- “I have to go frequently and worry that it is affecting my family.”
- “I miss being active. I don’t go places if it will be difficult to find a bathroom.”
- “I’m frustrated at work because I’m always rushing to the bathroom.”

If a doctor diagnoses strong, sudden urinary urges, frequency and accidents as OAB, there are treatment choices. Medicines and patient education programs with tips on behavioral changes, food and drink choices, and bladder training techniques can help manage OAB symptoms.

“Research shows that treatment success may be higher when behavioral therapy is combined with prescription medicine,” said Ms. Newman. “Speak to your doctor or health care provider today to find out more about OAB and which treatment option may be best for you.”

For more information, visit [www.OveractiveBladder.com](http://www.OveractiveBladder.com).

This information was provided by Pfizer Inc.