

# REGAIN YOUR FREEDOM

## Overcoming Overactive Bladder

### 5 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

- ✓ Do you have to urinate more than 7 times per day?
- ✓ Do you feel like you have to urinate all the time?
- ✓ Do you have difficulty urinating or emptying your bladder?
- ✓ Do you have accidents before reaching the bathroom?
- ✓ Do you get up more than once a night to use the bathroom?

If you answered "yes" to even one of these questions, take the next step and talk to your doctor.

You've seen the commercials. An attractive, 50-something woman in a mad-dash to the ladies' room. For women who experience overactive bladder, this scenario is all-too familiar. And altogether frustrating.

Urge urinary incontinence is a problem for more than 33 million Americans. Interrupted sleep, running to the bathroom day and night, and limiting activities based on bathroom availability are some of the symptoms women endure.

"I used to wake up 7 or 8 times a night just to use the bathroom," says Jane Jorgenson, 53, of Fairhope. "During the day, I wore a pad in case I leaked, which felt like a giant diaper. My skin chaffed and got rashes after accidents. It was humiliating," Jorgenson continues.

Sadly, only about half the women who endure overactive bladder seek medical help for it. Jorgenson, however, discussed her condition with gynecologist, Dr. Bobby Brown. He prescribed physical therapy and medication, and advised her of diet modifications. Still, her incontinence persisted.

"Urinary incontinence is a complex problem—there are several causes and types. In the last 10 years, we've been very successful treating stress urinary incontinence (leaking when you cough, sneeze or exercise). Now, we can fix overactive bladder with a new therapy called InterStim®," explains Dr. Brown.

The minimally invasive InterStim procedure which Dr. Brown and his partner Dr. Angela McCool perform is significantly improved from the first InterStim treatments developed a decade ago.

"The InterStim procedure of today gives women their freedom back – literally," explains Dr. Brown. "InterStim is performed on an outpatient basis, has no activity limitations upon returning home, and the success rate is greater than 80%," Dr. Brown adds.

InterStim uses a small stimulation system, implanted under the skin, that provides electrical stimulation of the sacral nerves located under the tailbone. The sacral nerves control bladder function. By gently stimulating the nerves, InterStim restores urinary control. The stimulation can easily be adjusted or deactivated by you at home as needed. The size of a silver dollar, the device is unobtrusive and fully concealed.

Best of all, women can learn prior to the procedure whether InterStim will be effective for them. Over the course of 2-5 days, patients can discern the effectiveness of the InterStim system with a hand-held battery device that allows them to stimulate the sacral nerves to control the bladder. This initial test is less invasive than having blood drawn or an IV placed. They



keep a diary of bladder function, and if the hand-held device works, they can schedule the appointment to implant a smaller device under the skin. "It's more convenient, enabling women to be fully active," McCool explains.

Drs. Brown and McCool are among the few physicians on the Eastern Shore performing the minimally invasive InterStim procedure at Thomas Hospital. If you think you might be a candidate for InterStim or want to learn more, call 990-1985 for an appointment.

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