

Advanced Technique

provides relief for Women with Urinary Incontinence

It is estimated that nearly 12 million Americans have some form of urinary incontinence, which is defined as the loss of ability to control urination. This far too common condition affects people of all ages, races and socioeconomic backgrounds. However, women are more than twice as likely as men to suffer from loss of bladder control. In addition, nearly half of all Americans who live in nursing homes are incontinent, and 70 percent of those affected are women.

“As the baby boom generation begins to enter their golden years, urinary incontinence will become more prevalent,” said Dr. Charles Fericola, a board-certified urologist on the medical staff of SOCH. “This is a generation of thriving, dynamic women who don’t want to give up their active lifestyle as a result of being incontinent.”

Unfortunately, despite the availability of a number of treatment options, many women choose to suffer in silence, rather than admit to having what they feel is an embarrassing condition.

“I have seen women who are incontinent plan their activities around their condition, always making sure bathroom facilities are nearby. They get into the habit of keeping a change of clothing with them all the time, and become ashamed of having to wear protection, such as Depends,” said Dr. Fericola. “They allow their condition to control their life, which, in turn, can affect their emotional and social well-being. But it doesn’t have to be that way.”

At SOCH, a sophisticated, minimally invasive technique called the tension free vaginal tape (TVT) procedure can provide significant relief for women with stress incontinence, which is characterized by the involuntary release of urine during activities that put pressure on the bladder, such as coughing, sneezing, or even walking.

“During TVT, I will insert a meshlike tape through tiny incisions in the upper abdomen,” Dr. Fericola explained. The tape is placed under the urethra, the tube that

carries urine from the bladder to the outside of the body. The tape acts like a hammock, keeping the urethra in place so that a cough or a sneeze will not cause leakage.”

TVT is performed on an outpatient basis, and the recovery process is much easier than for women who go through the traditional, invasive type of surgical procedures.

“This is a very effective, and relatively non-invasive treatment option for many women who struggle with stress incontinence,” said Dr. Fericola. “In fact, studies have shown a cure rate in 87 percent of women who have had TVT.”

While hopeful that this technique will provide relief to many of his patients, Dr. Fericola acknowledges that the treatment is not for everyone.

“Before treatment options are determined, it’s important to find out if there is an underlying cause of the incontinence,” he said.

Treatments vary depending on the patient’s medical history and can include changes in diet, pelvic floor exercise, behavioral therapy, medication and finally, surgery, depending on the severity of the condition.

*If you suspect you suffer from urinary incontinence or you would like to learn if you are a candidate for TVT, contact **SOCHConnect**, at **609-978-3400**.*



Some causes of incontinence include:

- Urinary tract or vaginal infections
- Effects of medicine
- Constipation
- Weak pelvic floor muscles due to pregnancy and childbirth
- Diseases and disorders involving nerves and/or muscles
- Immobility
- Some types of surgery



*Charles Fericola, MD
board-certified urologist*

