Bladder Problems Don’t Fix Themselves—Here’s What Actually Works Transcript

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Introduction to Female Urinary Issues

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So it lowered substance P. and reduced hyperactive bladder. So that's pretty impressive that you can take a simple supplement that will help. Now, I haven't found the L-theanine by itself to be enough, but L-theanine with Bawei Diwangwan and Electroacne.

Hi, and welcome to The Balancing Point. I'm Dr. John Needers, and I'm here to make traditional Chinese medicine functional medicine, and integrative health simple, practical, and fun, so you can restore balance, boost vitality, and enjoy a healthier life every single day.

Hi there. This is Dr. John back here to talk with you again in our Let's Talk About It series. And today we're going to talk about something that I speak about with my patients on a daily basis.

Again, most of my patients are women, about 90%, because my doctorate is in gynecological endocrinology. women's health and hormone health. I certainly do plenty of diabetes, et cetera, but most of my patients being female, we run into the issue of female urinary issues on a daily basis.

And I want to speak about three of those today. The first one I want to talk about is urinary incontinence. Now, this is something that was not often talked about.

When I first got into practice a few decades ago, it was rare for women to ever bring up the subject of urinary incontinence, and rarer still for a woman to come to me for urinary incontinence.

Urinary Incontinence and Pelvic Floor Therapy

But that's really changed quite a bit. Again, 25 years ago, I would ask that question and then they would acknowledge that they were having problems and we would treat it, and treat it very successfully, by the way.

But now they're more willing to kind of come up front with it. About some time, 10, 15 years ago, an aspiring PhD student needing to do something for his doctorate, decided to do interviews on the street with women, just random interviews.

And he interviewed a huge number of women. Don't quote me on the number, but I think it was about 5,000. And what he discovered is that 80% of women who had had two or more children had urinary and or fecal incontinence.

Now that's a huge number, 80%. and that's pretty consistent with what I see. One of the things that's changed though in the past few decades is that I'm seeing incontinence in a younger and younger group of females.

Now a primary reason for this is that we just don't do the types of exercises that people had consistently done and indigenous cultures still do, and that's squat.

They checked out women in indigenous cultures in Africa and even in Japanese cultures, and they found that the women squatted you know, not sitting in chairs, but would squat on their haunches or squat down to a low pillow two to 300 times a day.

Well, that's going to really strengthen the pelvic floor muscles. And since we spend most of our time when we're not walking, sitting around in chairs, so we're not exercising those pelvic muscles at all.

And this affects men and women, but due to their apparatus, women have a more difficult time with this. And so with incontinence, there are now many different treatments that are very, very effective.

I'm going to talk about a couple of those. Pelvic floor physical therapy has really advanced over the last 20 years. And the pelvic floor specialists do some amazing exams looking.

You know, most women, if they have incontinence, think that the muscles are too lax. And that Kegels will fix that. Well, I promise you, Kegels A won't fix that.

And often the problem is the opposite. Sometimes the muscles are too strong. And so you get an imbalance between weaker and stronger muscles. bladder starts to drop a little bit.

There's pressure from the uterus and the other thing sitting on it. So you get more and more pressure. You get weaker and weaker muscles or imbalanced muscles.

And so with pelvic floor physical therapy, I've seen some great things. In fact, there's a phenomenal pelvic floor PT across the street from me. However, we've found what's even more effective is electroacupuncture.

I have a meta-analysis, which is done on seven different research studies, and it's entitled, Effectiveness of Percutaneous Tibial Nerve Stimulation in the Treatment of Overactive Bladder Syndrome.

Electroacupuncture and Herbal Support

Very well done paper, and again, they looked at seven other research studies. and showed that electroacupuncture, and so electroacupuncture is placing very, very thin, painless needles in a couple of places on the lower medial leg, so the inside of the calf, essentially, and then attaching electrodes to it, which send an either imperceptible or barely perceptible electrical charge.

stimulates the tibial nerve that goes up toward the bladder and starts to develop better tone in the bladder and it's very successful. In the studies, the meta-analysis, they recommended 12 treatments.

We've had many referrals from medical doctors for this treatment, and it's extremely effective. Now, often we've gotten good results after two or three treatments.

It's really hard to say, but by 10 or 12, it's almost 100% effective. Now, once it's been done, over years, it can tend to come back, the urinary incontinence, and then we'll have patients purchase a very inexpensive TENS machine.

So once the problem's been rectified, because the electro acupuncture is much stronger and much more focused, the TENS machine can help keep things in order.

So that's been very effective. I also have a study that was actually three studies on different substances that can be used. One is the herbal formula, very, very ancient herbal formula, Bawei Di Huang Wan.

And it talks about how the Bawei Diwangwan releases certain chemicals and it changes signaling in the bladder. Very effective. What also you can use is a supplement and they did supplementation on L-theanine.

And we use L-theanine mostly for relaxation. helps with sleep, it helps people just relax when they're stressed. But in this study, they were using it to lower the amount of what's called substance P, which P for pain, but it can also do other things.

So it lowered substance P and reduced hyperactive bladder. So that's pretty impressive that you can take a simple supplement that will help. Now I haven't found the L-theanine by itself to be enough.

But L-theanine with Bawei Diwangwan and electroacupuncture, man, that is awesome, awesome. Also, they found that catechins, catechins are substances that are often found in tea, green tea, black tea, et cetera.

It also lowers substance P and can help with hyperactive bladder. Of course, the problem is you're also going to have caffeine and you're going to have more fluid intake.

So it's, you know, you got to balance that out a little bit. Another study on herbal medicine showed that combining two single herbs, Wuling San, well that's actually a formula, with another single herb, Shanja, again reduced substance P.

So that seems to be the magic thing is reducing substance P and that also reduced excess bladder activity. So you have lots of options for dealing with incontinence.

Nighttime Urination and ADH

A second thing that we've found to be pretty common is excess trips to the bathroom at night. And that can get a little trickier. There are many things that can cause that.

If it's really significant, we'll do a test for something called antidiuretic hormone. And so if antidiuretic hormones are off, What antidiuretic hormones do is they concentrate the urine and at night it should kick in.

ADH is formed in the hypothalamus. It's stored in the posterior pituitary. And then when your body needs to sleep and not get up to go to the bathroom, you then release the ADH and don't have to go to the bathroom as often at night.

If you have low ADH, then you're in trouble. And we have one patient that we tried like heck to get her doctor to run that test. He refused. So we ran it.

And sure enough, her ADH was phenomenally low. So the bottom line, what I want you to get is if you have any bladder issues at all, you know, urgency.

We treat a lot of urgency. We treat a lot of stress incontinence. We treat nighttime urination excesses. And we have tremendous success. So don't give up, don't ignore it.

I promise you, it does not ever go away by itself. You really have to do something. Now that once you get it under control, the PT can show you some exercises.

You can go to a trainer who can give you some exercises to help maintain a healthy, happy bladder. So that's our talk for today. I'll be back with you in a week or so to talk about another subject.

on Let's Talk About It. So be happy, be healthy.

Closing Remarks and Resources

This is Dr. John signing out. Bye bye. Thank you for joining me on The Balancing Point. If you enjoyed today's episode, please follow the show, share it with a friend, and leave a review.

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