

We focused on urinary incontinence-- that means leaking any amount of urine when you don't mean to-- because it's one of the most common health problems that affects women. And it even affects women before their first pregnancy.

Leaking faeces or passing wind when you don't mean to-- this is known as anal incontinence, and it affects about one in every 12 women after childbirth and even up to four years later. Whilst we haven't focused on this during these videos, we have developed some information for you and made suggestions of how you can help yourself and ask for help.

We learned from women in the MAMMI Study that as many as one in three women leaked urine before their first pregnancy, and almost two in five leaked urine during pregnancy. Three months after the birth, one in two women leaked urine. As many as one in five women still leaked urine one year after giving birth. That's a lot of women who are affected.

Women in the MAMMI Study also told us that they didn't talk about it, and many said that they were not asked about it by a maternity care professional during, or even after, pregnancy. This creates a real silence around it. So much so that women who do have an incontinence, regardless of the amount, can feel ashamed, embarrassed, and alone and think it's only happening to them. It even makes some women change the type of exercise they do, and it makes some women stop exercising completely.

Ever think about the language that's sometimes used in everyday chatting when we're talking about leaking urine? People might say, I laughed so much I nearly wet myself. Or you might hear a woman say, it's normal to leak urine in pregnancy because the baby is pressing on my bladder.

Statements like this have trivialised it, and they've almost normalised it. What we really want you to understand is that it's never normal to leak urine when you don't mean to. You shouldn't have to wear a pad or any special type of pants to protect yourself or catch any leakage of urine.

By working through these videos and resources, you can help yourself regain and maintain control. Think of it this way-- you control it. Don't let it control you.