



# InterStim Therapy

## THE NEXT STEP IN MANAGING URINARY INCONTINENCE IN WOMEN

By Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG

**Y**ou see them all the time. Television ads about new medication aimed at treating bladder control issue, urinary incontinence, urgency, and frequency problems. Talking pipes, water balloons, even the symbol from a restroom door now give new hope to the estimated 21 million women who suffer with occasional or chronic urinary incontinence and bladder issues.

Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG, is a board certified physician and founder of the Florida Bladder Institute, the region's only Urogynecology practice dedicated to the treatment of bladder and incontinence issues (urinary and fecal) in women. Dr. Gauta explains the positive effects these ads have had on women.

"These ads have served an important role in helping to remove the stigma and embarrassment associated with incontinence. Because of this, women are becoming less reluctant to raise the topic with their doctor." He added, "As a result, patients and their doctors are having healthy dialogues about the many treatment options available to them that not only fit their particular lifestyle but help to improve their overall quality of life."

### **When Medications Don't Work – InterStim Therapy Offers Hope and Control**

For many women, medications combined with other conservative treatment options such as pelvic floor rehabilitation and biofeedback can be quite effective in controlling non-obstructive urinary incontinence and bladder issues. A conservative approach using conventional treatments is always the best first step in the care plan. Botox injections into the bladder are also very effective and are performed in the office, along with a newer way of stimulating the bladder nerve called Urgent PC or tibial nerve stimulation. Both are also very effective alternatives to medications and failed exercises.

For others, there is InterStim Therapy, a proven approach that is highly effective and does not involve the inconvenience and side effects of drug therapy.

According to Dr. Gauta, "InterStim Therapy is an FDA-approved neurostimulator device that has been used for more than a decade in patients with urinary retention and overactive bladder issues. Of the more than 100,000 patients who have undergone the procedure, 80% to nearly 100% have seen dramatic improvement in their symptoms."

Dr. Gauta explains how the device works, "Most people are familiar with a pacemaker and how the small electrical device provides stimulation to regulate a slow heart-



beat. The InterStim is quite similar in that we place a small stimulation system above the hip and run small wires the size of a few strands of hair alongside the sacral nerve which controls the bladder and anal function. The InterStim Therapy gently stimulates these nerves to help restore urinary control."

Once the device is implanted, the stimulation can easily be adjusted or even deactivated by yourself at home or by your doctor with a simple, in-office programming session.

InterStim Therapy is a proven treatment for overactive bladder and urinary retention issues and is covered by Medicare and many other private insurance companies.

### **Is InterStim Therapy Right For You?**

If you have tried urinary control medications or other conventional treatments without success, you may be a candidate for the procedure. Dr. Gauta and his team from the Florida Bladder Institute will gather information about previous treatment and conduct several studies to ensure that the right diagnosis is made and that all other treatment options have been utilized to their fullest. If you are found to be a candidate, a test stimulation is conducted that allows you to evaluate how the therapy affects your symptoms. If you get good symptom relief, long-term InterStim Therapy is then considered.



239-449-7979

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