Marathon Runners Might Have to Deal With Leaky Bladder

By Amber Moore
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Marathons might not mean just blisters and sore feet but also leaky bladders, say researchers from Loyola University.

"The added stress on the body that comes with running a marathon can cause urinary stress incontinence problems during the race or down the road," said Melinda Abernethy from Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine.

Urinary incontinence (UI) is when there is involuntary loss of urine. The condition occurs when there are problems with the nerves and muscles that hold the urine in the body. UI affects twice as many women as men.

Stress incontinence happens during certain activities like coughing, sneezing and exercising, says Medline Plus.

"People who already suffer from incontinence also are at risk for bladder-control issues while running," Dr. Abernethy said.

The researchers from Loyola University Health System will be surveying long-distance marathon runners and the risk of urinary incontinence.

"This study will help us to better understand the link between endurance running and pelvic-floor disorders, including incontinence," Dr. Abernethy said.

"Putting off going to the bathroom during the race is not healthy for your bladder. Runners also should avoid diuretics, such as coffee or tea, before the race, because this can stimulate the bladder and cause you to visit the bathroom more frequently," said Dr. Abernethy.

Abernethy added that marathoners can reduce the risk of UI by doing pelvic floor exercises like Kegels exercise while running.