

# Breaking the Silence about Incontinence

No one likes to talk about it, but incontinence is a serious issue affecting some 3.8 million American men. There are multiple causes—age, obesity and diseases such as diabetes among them—but the most common is a side effect of prostate cancer treatment, particularly surgery.

“Cancer doesn’t cause incontinence, the treatments do, and surgery causes the most,” says Dr. Thomas E. Moody, a urologist who practices in Birmingham, Alabama, and a board member of ZERO—The Project to End Prostate Cancer. He says that between three and five percent of men who have prostate cancer surgery suffer severe incontinence afterwards.

Retired Major League Baseball outfielder Ken Griffey, Sr. was diagnosed with prostate cancer three years ago and underwent surgery almost a year later. He is now two years cancer free but dealing with side effects. “You don’t like to talk about the incontinence thing,” he says. “It’s a slow process, you just have to be patient. My doctor told me up front, two, maybe three or four years, so I knew what to

expect. But the important thing is to get screened. Everything is based on getting diagnosed early. I tell people, have your doctor check you regularly and test your PSA levels.”

Moody echoes the importance of regular testing, pointing out that deaths from prostate cancer have dropped almost 40 percent since the advent of PSA tests in 1985. He also says there has been significant improvement in the management of incontinence following prostate cancer surgery. At his urology practice, for example, specialists conduct bio-feedback training with patients leading up to surgery to teach them to consciously direct muscles that control urination. He says that overall, most men have regained continence after three to five months unless other risk factors come into play.

For those suffering longer term effects, Moody points to two surgical options—installation of a “male sling” under the urethra or insertion of an artificial sphincter around the urethra if the original is damaged. He advises waiting at least six months after surgery before considering such alternatives, but says, “The risk of a man living the rest of his life incontinent is near zero.”

It’s also relatively easy these days to prevent incontinence from constraining a normal, active life. Adult absorbent products such as Kimberly-Clark’s Depend brand, the market leader which helped established the category some 25 years ago, offer comfortable and discreet assistance to those managing incontinence. These products continue to improve with innovations such as gender-specific models with better fit and comfort. Moody’s urol-

ogy practice recommends the gender-specific Depend models as the best and most cost-effective products on the market.

“Managing incontinence can be traumatic, and fear of discovery can cause unnecessary anxiety,” says Mark Cammarota, marketing director for the Depend brand at Kimberly-Clark.

“Depend is committed to developing products that help people overcome this anxiety and maintain their normal active life.”

From now through 2010, Kimberly-Clark is donating a portion of the proceeds from certain Depend products to ZERO—The Project to End Prostate Cancer up to a total of \$250,000.

*“As a pro quarterback, I took some hard hits. But the shots from the league’s best linebackers paled in comparison to a hit I took after my football career was over.*

*In 1991, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. Being a professional athlete, I always paid attention to my health and continued to do so throughout retirement. So when I was struck, it was a shock to the system.*

*The good news is that prostate cancer is not only treatable, it’s beatable. Through education and early detection, the number of deaths from this disease can be reduced dramatically.*

*My wife, Linda, made the appointment for me to be tested. Thanks to her, I found out early, and it saved my life.*

*To help educate other men, I’ve partnered with Kimberly-Clark for “The Depend Campaign to End Prostate Cancer.” Visit [depend.com](http://depend.com) to hear my story and find out more about our campaign to eliminate this disease.”*

*- Len Dawson, Pro Football Hall of Famer*