# Denise Asks Awkward Questions – Light Bladder Leakage

**Denise:** Hello everybody. I'm comedian Denise Scott, and welcome to Denise Asks Awkward Questions with Jean Hailes. My guest today is Louise Brown, Head of Public Health and Education at Jean Hailes. She gets thousands of questions each year from women who are confused, frustrated, or just plain angry about their healthcare. All right, it's time to get awkward!

Okay, Georgia from Darwin in the Northern Territory, of course, writes, "A little bit of wee comes out when I sneeze. My friend said that's called light bladder leakage, LBL but I wasn't sure if that was a thing. So is it a thing?

**Louise:** Well, you've got me on one of my pet topics, Denise. I had never heard of LBL until my niece, my 20 something year old niece, used this term to me. It may have even been in a text. And I work in women's health, have done for 20 years, and I went LBL, question mark? And she said, Light Bladder Leakage. And I said, you know, that's actually incontinence, don't you? And she was horrified. But this term is becoming, you know, used all the time, I think particularly with younger women, and I just feel like that's just a coverup really. That's saying Light Bladder Leakage is, you know, is an okay thing when actually it's a form of incontinence and it's something you probably need help for. And I noticed even the period undies, you know, the undies that girls are wearing, or women, are wearing for, for periods, they're even advertising that they're good for light bladder leakage. And I just kind of go, "Hang on, hang on, we should be doing something about this, not just using something to mop it up." If you pardon me.

**Denise:** Oh, well what should we be doing? I'll tell you why. Louise. I'm doing a show with Judith Lucy at the moment, and there's a point every time we do the show where I have to yell at Judith and every time, I have LBL. And of course I don't tell the audience that's just between me and myself, but... so I should be doing something about that?

**Louise:** Absolutely. Yeah.

**Denise:** Who do you see?

**Louise:** Well, pelvic floor physiotherapist is probably the best place to start, to be honest. They specialize...

**Denise:** You know, as soon as you mention that, pelvic floors. I'm doing them swear, I swear I'm doing them as I sit here.

**Louise:** But are you doing them correctly?

**Denise:** I don't know.

**Louise:** This is the thing. The pelvic floor physio will be able to tell you if you're doing them correctly. Are you switching on the right muscles at the right time? Are you drawing up the right muscles? I'm not a physio so I won't use all the right terminology, but they're expert in this area so they will be able to assess what you're doing, making sure that your pelvic floor muscles are doing the right thing. Because they're not that easy, you know, you've gotta get them right. You've got to connect the muscles at the right times.

We have some really great information on the Jean Hailes website, but if you've been doing them and you're still having the problem, pelvic floor physio for you.

**Denise:** So LOL is okay, LBL...

**Louise:** No go.

**Denise:** Muriel from Alice Springs Northern Territory asks, "I don't know how to talk to my doctor about my private parts."

**Louise:** I think this is a real challenge for so many women. Especially different age groups, different cultural backgrounds. I just saw a fabulous film called 'Good Luck To You, Leo Grand on the weekend'.

**Denise:** Oh, with Emma Thompson.

**Louise:** Yeah, with Emma Thompson. And she is a middle aged woman who has had a... sheltered kind of sexual life probably, and she's never had an orgasm. And she decides that that's something she really needs to do, and she hires a sex worker to do it. And you kind of feel her pain because she's so embarrassed about the whole sex thing, about being naked, about talking about sex, talking about desire, but I think it's really, really common.

People do find it really difficult, you know, showing their vulva to the doctor or talking about the fact that they're having painful sex or any of those intimate things is a real challenge. There's lots of research that says that women won't bring up a topic, but if the GP asked about that topic, they would share.

So I think we've gotta find a GP that we're comfortable with, which is not always easy. But maybe the other thing is take someone with you when you go to the appointment. Maybe that makes you feel more comfortable, you have someone with you. Or you've written down the things you want to talk about that might be easier for you. Or you have a practice saying what you wanna say before you go.

So there's lots of things that you can do, but I think the GP will always have seen this before or heard this story before. You won't be the first one, you won't be the last one to present with that problem. And it's about just finding that level of comfort that you can talk about pretty much anything in that doctor's room and hopefully get the help that you need.

**Denise:** Alright, that's it for today. If I'm not here and you have more questions, go to jeanhailes.org.au. Bye everybody.

Information about Jean Hailes for Women’s Health

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