

Bladder Training

The passage of urine is caused by a contraction of the bladder. Normally the bladder does not contract until it is convenient to pass urine, meaning the contractions of the bladder are under control of the brain. In some people this ability of the brain to control the bladder is lost or diminished. The bladder is then liable to contract at any time without warning. These uncontrolled bladder contractions are not in any way dangerous, but are a common cause of frequency, urgency and leakage to urine

These instructions will help you retrain your bladder to listen to you and your brain. Your attitude is one of the most important aspects of this treatment and it is crucial that you follow all the steps that your doctor has outlined to you.

1. **Fluid Restriction.** It is important to avoid over distension or over stimulation of the bladder and you are to limit your total daily fluid intake to **four 8-ounce glasses** of fluid per day. This amount of fluid is enough to allow all normal bodily functions and there are no harmful effects on the kidney.
2. **Empty your Bladder Routinely.** If you have severe frequency and urgency, or urgency incontinence, begin the program by emptying your bladder **every two hours** by the clock while you are awake. The bladder should normally be emptied every 3 hours. No timed voiding is necessary at nighttime
3. **Postponement of Voiding.** After you have adjusted to timed voiding, attempt to **postpone urination** between the two hour intervals. You are teaching the bladder to listen to you.
4. **Exercising the Pelvic Floor Muscles.** Studies reveal that strengthening the pelvic floor muscles by repetitive tightening and relaxing, helps in the management of the irritable bladder as well as incontinence.
 - a. You should start repetitively squeezing the pelvic muscles for 5 seconds and relaxing them for another 5 seconds.
 - b. Do it ten times in a row and five times a day.
 - c. Increase the frequency from 5 times to 10 times after one week and continue so until you do 20 contractions in the row (= 100 contractions per day). This will increase the speed of your pelvic floor **muscle recruitment**.
 - d. Start working on the length of the squeeze and gradually prolong the contraction from 5 to 7 seconds, to 10 seconds and eventually to 20 seconds. (This increases the **resting tone** of your muscles).

If you can stop or slow your urinary stream when you do the squeezing part of the exercise then you are doing the exercise properly. Once you know how to do the exercise **do not** practice it every time you void.

5. **Medication.** Medication may also be used to help further relax the bladder. These medications have side effects such as dry mouth and constipation. If you have excessive side effects please contact your doctor so that we may adjust the dosage.

As you make progress in retraining your bladder, you will see the volumes you are able to store in your bladder increase, the frequency of urination decrease and the episodes of urgency and/or urgency incontinence decrease.