

Bladder Retraining

An information guide



Bladder Retraining

This leaflet is to provide you with information regarding retraining your bladder to help with symptoms such as urgency, frequency and incontinence. The advice is effective for both men and women.

You should use it in conjunction to the advice given to you from your health professional. If you have any difficulty understanding the information or following the advice you should ask your doctor, specialist pelvic health physiotherapist or continence advisor.

Normal bladder function

Your bladder normally stores urine, which is produced by your kidneys. The kidneys produce urine all the time but the amount of urine you produce depends on how much you eat, drink and sweat.

Your bladder should be able to hold 400-600mls of urine. Toilet visits should be around 6-8 times a day.

The bladder should fill up gradually and you should be able to hold on for a suitable time until you wish to empty your bladder. The bladder is made up of a muscle called the detrusor. When this contracts the muscles around your urethra relax and your bladder will empty.

Complex nerve messages are sent between the brain, bladder and pelvic floor muscles to give you the sensation of your bladder filling and control of when you empty your bladder.

What is an overactive bladder?

If your bladder contracts without warning it can give you an urgent need to pass urine – urinary urgency. If you have this problem you are likely to need to pass urine more frequently and in small volumes. It can also cause you to get up in the night to pass urine.

An overactive bladder can also cause leakage of urine – urge incontinence.

For most people the cause of these symptoms are unknown.

What is bladder retraining?

Bladder retraining is a way of teaching your bladder to hold more urine and reducing the number of times you need to pass urine in a day. It can also help if you experience urgency or urinary leaking.

It is a method for regaining control of your bladder instead of your bladder controlling you.

It takes time and determination to retrain your bladder it will not work overnight.

You will have good and bad days initially don't give up!

How to retrain your bladder

You need to gradually increase the time between trips to the toilet. You do this by ignoring the feeling of needing to urinate. If you continue to respond to these messages and go to the toilet every time you have the urge your symptoms will continue and possibly get worse. Therefore try not to go immediately, ignore the feelings initially for a few minutes and gradually try to increase this time.

It is helpful to complete a bladder diary and discuss this with your health professional so the advice can be individual to you.

Tips to help you hold on:-

- Distract your mind e.g. thinking of something complex or keeping busy
- Contract your Pelvic floor muscles for 10 – 20 seconds
- Sit down on something firm (therefore applying pressure to the area between your anus and urethral opening)
- Clench your toes

Other suggestions to help you manage your symptoms

- Ensure you are drinking enough fluid aim for 1.5 – 2 litres a day. (Concentrated urine irritates the bladder more and can worsen symptoms)
- Try to reduce caffeinated drinks, fizzy drinks and alcohol – these all are bladder irritants. Try to drink mainly water, milk, herbal/fruit teas, decaffeinated tea/coffee or diluted fruit juice
- If you get up in the night to urinate try not to drink after 8.30pm
- It is important to remember not to go to the toilet 'just in case'
- Try to avoid constipation
- Try to avoid getting stressed or anxious regarding your symptoms

If bladder retraining fails or you are struggling, speak to your health professional regarding any appropriate medication.

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org Tel – 01926 357220

www.pogp.org.uk

www.cobfoundation.org Tel 0121 702 0820

If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service

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Dacă engleza nu este prima ta limbă și ai nevoie de ajutor, te rugăm să contactezi Serviciul de interpretare și traducere

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☎ : 0161 627 8770

@ : interpretation@pat.nhs.uk

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