



Advice to help control urgency and frequency

Urgency

- Urgency means having to rush to the toilet to pass urine
- This advice sheet gives you some help in trying to control the problem

Frequency

- Frequency means needing to go to the toilet a lot
- More than eight times in 24 hours
- You only pass small amounts of urine but feel it should be more

Usual Control

When your bladder is filling, the muscle of the bladder stays relaxed. When your bladder is nearly full your brain receives the message and you hold on until it is convenient to go to the toilet. When you decide to go to the toilet the bladder muscle contracts and urine is expelled.

We usually pass urine between four and seven times in the day and no more than once during the night.

Why do you have these problems?

Urgency and frequency happen because the bladder starts to contract before you can reach the toilet.

Sometimes this can mean you will leak urine and you may start to go to the toilet 'just in case' to avoid being wet. This can cause you bladder to hold only small amounts of urine instead of the full amount it should hold.

What you can do to help?

- Aim to drink 1500mls of fluid per day-some of this should be water
- Do not drink less than this amount as this may lead to bladder infections and can also cause constipation
- Do not go to the toilet 'just in case'
- Try not to get too anxious about your bladder. Anxiety makes things worse
- Try to control the urgent feeling and hold on for as long as possible. Sitting on a hard chair reading a magazine or counting backwards from 50 can sometimes help
- Do go to the toilet when you have controlled the urge
- Slowly increase the times between visits to the toilet

What about at night?

You should not drink liquids before going to bed!

Information for Patients

Your bladder will usually hold 400-600 ml (12-20 ounces) overnight. If you drink before going to bed, you make more urine than your bladder can hold until morning.

If you drink during the night when you wake up, this also makes the problem worse. If you wake during the night for other reasons and do not normally need to void at night, it is best not to empty your bladder if you can help it. Try not to build bad bladder habits.

Diet and the bladder

Many patients have found that certain foods and drinks may make the problem worse and avoiding these foods and drinks may be helpful. The most common 'problem foods' are listed below, however, not everyone is affected by the same things therefore only cut out the foods and drinks on the list which you feel make the symptoms worse.

Below is a list of food and acidic drinks which may make the problem worse:

- Fruit juice, tomato juice
- Fizzy drink, carbonated water
- Vinegar
- Alcoholic beverages
- Spicy foods
- Caffeine-contained in tea, coffee, cola, chocolate and cocoa, green tea
- Some medications(check with your pharmacist)
- Lucozade
- Tomatoes, avocados, eggplant, beans, onions, bananas, raisins, pineapples, citrus fruits
- Some cheeses and yoghurts
- Some artificial sweeteners.

Suitable Alternatives:

- Water, milk, still drinks
- Decaffeinated tea and coffee
- Some herbal teas
- Caffeine free cola
- Other vegetables not listed
- Cooked apples, cherries
- Processed cheese, cream cheese, ricotta and cottage cheese

If you do exclude any of these foods and drinks, and there is no improvement, then that food/drink is unlikely to be having an effect, and may be re-introduced

Bladder training

Bladder training helps you to reduce the number of times you need to go to the toilet. It will also help to stop urine leaking before you reach the toilet.

What you need to do

You may have been given a fluid chart to fill in, complete the chart showing:

- How much and what you drink

Information for Patients

- When you go to the toilet both day and night
- The times you leak any urine
- If possible, how much urine you pass

After a week, look at the chart and see how long you can go between visits to the toilet and the largest amount of urine you have passed.

You now need to teach your bladder to hold on to more urine.

Holding on

Read the advice about urgency and frequency again and try to follow the advice about what you eat and drink, and also about controlling the urgency of your bladder.

The programme

You are trying to stretch your bladder to hold more urine and make it wait until you are ready to pass urine. Then you will be able to reduce the number of times you need to go to the toilet.

Try to:

- When you feel the urge to go, hold on for a minute, then five minutes, then ten minutes and so on
- If you can go to 2 hours then aim to last 2¼ hours, then 2½ hours and so on
- Try to reduce the number of times by one a day e.g. ten down to nine
- You are aiming to reach six times in the day and once at night
- Make sure you do pelvic exercises as this will help you to keep the bladder closed and to make the urgent feeling disappear

Remember

It will take some time before you start to feel confident and may take several weeks. Keep going with the programme and you will succeed.

Helpful addresses:

Bladder Health UK
T: 0161 214 4591
E: bbuk@disabledliving.co.uk
Mon – Fri 09.00 – 16.30

Our commitment to confidentiality

We keep personal and clinical information about you to ensure you receive appropriate care and treatment. Everyone working in the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential.

We will share information with other parts of the NHS to support your healthcare needs, and we will inform your GP of your progress unless you ask us not to. If we need to share information that identifies you with other organisations we will ask for your consent. You can help us by pointing out any information in your records which is wrong or needs updating.

Information for Patients

Additional Sources of Information:

Go online and view NHS Choices website for more information about a wide range of health topics <http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx>

You may want to visit one of our Health Information Centres located in:

- Main Entrance at Birmingham Heartlands Hospital Tel: 0121 424 2280
 - Treatment Centre at Good Hope Hospital Tel: 0121 424 9946
 - Clinic Entrance Solihull Hospital Tel: 0121 424 5616
- or contact us by email: healthinfo.centre@heartofengland.nhs.uk.

Dear Patient

We welcome your views on what you thought of this patient information leaflet, also any suggestions on how you feel we can improve through our feedback link below:

- Patient Information Feedback email:
patientinformationleafletfeedback@heartofengland.nhs.uk

If you wish to make any other comments this can be done through the links listed below:

- Patient Opinion: www.patientopinion.org.uk
- I want great care: www.iwantgreatcare.org (Here you can leave feedback about your doctor)

Be helpful and respectful: think about what people might want to know about our patient information and this hospital and how your experiences might benefit others. Remember your words must be polite and respectful, and you cannot name individuals on the sites.

If you have any questions you may want to ask about your condition or your treatment or if there is anything you do not understand and you wish to know more about please write them down and your doctor will be more than happy to try and answer them for you.

If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version please ask a member of staff or email patientexperience@uhb.nhs.uk.