

Lifestyle Guidelines to Improve Your Bladder Control

Bladder Control Tips

1. Do not severely reduce the fluids you drink to avoid going to the bathroom.

Reducing the amount of fluid you drink to cope with your urinary problem may actually make your condition worse. Your body needs a certain amount of fluid to work properly (minimum 5-6 cups per day). If you are not drinking this amount, your body will conserve fluid by producing less urine. The urine you do produce may become very concentrated and irritating to the bladder. It will have a dark colour and a strong odour. In addition, a fluid intake that is too low may lead to problems with constipation. This may make your bladder problems worse.



2. Drink only moderate volumes of fluid.

It is recommended that you drink moderate amounts (5-6 cups) of non-caffeinated, non-carbonated liquids every day. You should cut back on fluids after 6 p.m. if you are waking more than once in the night to urinate. It is best to spread the intake of fluids throughout the day. Taking large amounts (over 8-10 ounces) of fluid at any single time can overwhelm the bladder and make it more difficult to hold the urine.

3. Empty your bladder before going to sleep.

Have nothing to drink for the 2-3 hours before going to bed. This should help you to avoid frequent trips to the bathroom during the night. This may also help if getting to the bathroom on time in the morning is a problem for you.

4. Always empty your bladder completely.

Always be sure that you have emptied your bladder completely. At the end of voiding, wait and give an extra push to be sure that all the urine is out.

5. Empty your bladder before and after intercourse.

6. Reduce your caffeine intake.

It is best to avoid drinks such as coffee, tea, colas, and cocoa that contain caffeine. Caffeine has a diuretic effect (causes the kidneys to increase the production of urine so that your bladder fills more quickly and you have to urinate more frequently). Caffeine may also irritate the bladder causing more contractions (tightenings), urgency (the feeling of having to rush to get to the bathroom on time) or frequency (a frequent need to urinate). Try drinking decaffeinated beverages. If you must drink beverages with caffeine, then it would be best to reduce the intake to no more than 2 cups a day. Avoid caffeinated beverages in the evening.

7. Modify what you drink.

Alcohol (for example, beer, wine, or hard liquor) can interfere with bladder control. It should be used moderately (one drink per day) or not at all. For some people, avoiding citrus juices or fruits and tomato products may also be helpful.

8. Drink "bladder-friendly" fluids.

The fluids that are most friendly to your bladder are water, apple juice and grape juice. Cranberry juice may be effective for people who have repeated bladder infections. One to two glasses per day are recommended. It will not cure an infection but it may help prevent one. Pure cranberry juice with no added sugar is recommended, not cranberry drinks which have very little cranberry content. However, if you experience urgency, cranberry juice may worsen your problem and it should be avoided.