

Bladder Retraining Information

This handout is designed to help those with an overactive bladder regain control. It advises on bladder retraining and describes ways of holding on when you are feeling 'urgent' to empty your bladder.

The success of the programme depends on how carefully you can follow the instructions below. It can take several weeks to work, and has helped lots of people to regain bladder control and reduce the urge to pass urine.

Tips to help you hold on

These will help you to overcome the urgency and stop leakage:

- Sit down / stand still.
- Do not tighten your abdominal muscles.
- Take a couple of deep breaths and stay calm.
- Acknowledge the feeling, but remember urgency does not always mean that the bladder is full.
- Contract/squeeze your pelvic floor muscles (your Healthcare Professional, Specialist Nurse or Physiotherapist will teach you). This helps to 'switch off' the bladder and close the outlet tube.
- Sitting on the edge of a firm chair may also help.
- Mental distraction; for example, counting backwards from 500 in lots of 8 may also help.

Bladder Re-Training Programme

- Commence Bladder Training as soon as is practically possible.
- Drink 6-8 mugs daily – avoiding caffeinated drinks eg. coffee, tea, fizzy drinks, hot chocolate and artificial sweeteners.
- Drink decaffeinated tea and coffee or fruit teas (some people even find decaffeinated drinks an irritant and this may need to be monitored). Drink more water and fruit juice
- Also avoid alcohol.

- When you get the urge to pass urine, do not go to the toilet. Instead use the techniques explained above to help you to hold.
- The aim is to hold longer as time goes by so that your bladder learns how to fill up and stay relaxed.
 - Week 1: hold for 5 minutes.
 - Week 2: hold for 10 minutes.
 - Week 3: hold for 15 minutes.
 - Week 4: hold for 20 minutes.
 - Week 5: hold for 25 minutes.
 - Week 6: hold for 30 minutes.

(or follow an individual plan agreed with your Healthcare Professional)

- The urge feeling can be the first sign that your bladder is filling up but it may subside. Try to carry on as normal until it is time to go to the toilet.
- When you go to the toilet, do not rush. Sit down on the seat or stand at the toilet, do not hover over it, and do not push or strain to empty your bladder.

Useful Contact

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