

## Practising your exercises

Remember, it's possible to put yourself back in control of your bladder and not have your bladder in control of you.

- ◆ Start by holding on after you feel the urge to pass urine for ..... minutes

Do this every time you need to pass urine to establish the bladder into a new routine

- ◆ When you are able to do this for 3 complete days, increase holding time to ..... minutes

Continue in this pattern, increasing holding time by ..... minutes each time. As you increase the hold time some slight recurrence of leakage may be experienced. Don't be discouraged, keep on with the retraining and this should settle.

## Helpful tips

- ◆ Try drinking decaffeinated drinks.
- ◆ Try to keep your bowel habits regular. Eating a well-balanced diet containing plenty of wholegrain foods and fruit and vegetables with sufficient fluids will help to keep you regular.
- ◆ Tighten your pelvic floor whilst holding the urge
- ◆ Sit on a hard surface
- ◆ Distract your attention from your bladder, e.g. watch television
- ◆ Always walk slowly to the toilet, rushing is more likely to make you leak

If you have followed the retraining programme over a period of 2/3 months, you should be well on the way to regaining bladder control, however, if you feel there is no improvement, please seek further help from your GP, Continence Advisor or Nurse.

Further help and advice on a bladder or bowel problem can be obtained by contacting the Specialist Nurses at the Continence Advisory Service.

**Compliments, comments, concerns or complaints?** If you have any compliments, comments, concerns or complaints and you would like to speak to somebody about them please telephone **01773 525119** or email **dchst.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net**

**Are we accessible to you?** This publication is available on request in other formats (for example, large print, easy read, Braille or audio version) and languages. For free translation and/or other format please call **01246 515224**, or email us **dchst.communications@nhs.net**

**Continence Advisory Service  
Alfreton Primary Care Centre  
Church Street  
Alfreton  
Derbyshire  
DE55 7AH**

**Tel: 01773 546960**

**Fax: 01773 546976**

**[www.dchs.nhs.uk](http://www.dchs.nhs.uk)**

## Patient Information Leaflet



## Retraining Your Over Active Bladder

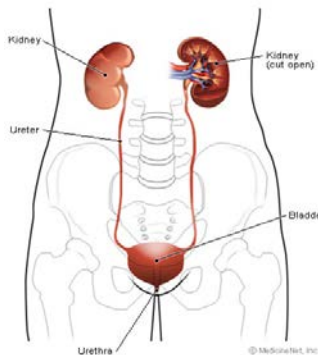
**Clinic:**

**Contact:**

## How does the urinary system work?

Urine is produced continuously, day and night, by the kidneys. It contains waste products from the body and a steady trickle passes down the ureters from the kidneys to the bladder. The bladder acts as a storage tank which expands on filling rather like a balloon. Messages are sent along the nerves to the brain as the bladder fills.

When there is between 250-400mls of urine stored, a strong desire to pass urine is felt. Most people will pass urine 3-4 hourly during waking hours and perhaps once during the night.



When the bladder can only hold a small amount of urine and needs to be emptied often, this is known as **frequency**.

When the bladder needs to be emptied in a great hurry, this is known as **urgency**.

Where there is a loss of urine, this is known as **leakage**.

One, or a combination of these symptoms is known as Overactive Bladder Syndrome

## What causes frequency, urgency and leakage?

- ◆ Urinary tract infections may cause frequency and urgency and you should always have a suspected infection checked by your doctor.
- ◆ Some beverages irritate the bladder and can make the kidneys produce more urine giving rise to a frequency problem, eg tea, coffee, cola, cocoa, drinking chocolate and fresh orange and grapefruit juice.
- ◆ Alcoholic drinks may have a similar effect.
- ◆ Not drinking enough fluids. Try to have about 8 drinks a day. (1.5 litres)
- ◆ The bladder is very sensitive to our emotional state and frequency and urgency commonly occur when we are anxious or depressed.
- ◆ Cold weather or contact with water can also sometimes cause urgency.
- ◆ Constipation can also be a cause of urgency or frequency because a distended bowel can press on the bladder and irritate it.
- ◆ Frequent emptying of the bladder can become a habit some people think that an opportunity to pass urine should never be missed. This prevents the bladder from filling completely and this may result in a small bladder capacity

Some women may experience symptoms of frequency, urgency and leakage prior to menstruation or following the menopause.

## How can bladder problems be tackled?

If symptoms of frequency, urgency and/or leakage are being experienced, it is necessary to find out the cause. In order to do this, it is helpful to keep a record of how the bladder is working for three days.

### How to keep a record

Each day, write down:

- ◆ How many drinks, and what they are. If possible, note the time as well.
- ◆ How many times urine is passed. If possible, note the time as well.
- ◆ Measure and record the amount of urine passed at each visit to the toilet. This is easily done by using a measuring jug.
- ◆ How often leakage of urine occurs.
- ◆ If wearing a protective pad or pant, when this has been changed.

### Understanding the record and tackling the problem

- ◆ Have you had 8 drinks at regular intervals throughout the day? If not, adjust the amount you drink accordingly, remembering to avoid caffeine and pure citrus fruit juices.
- ◆ Has urine been passed more than 8 times per day? (if so bladder retraining may be required). Note the largest amount of urine passed. Your aim should be to pass about this amount of urine on each visit to the toilet, avoiding frequent visits to pass small amounts.
- ◆ If leakage occurs, bladder retraining combined with pelvic floor exercises (see 'Pelvic Floor Exercises for Women / Men to Improve Bladder Control' leaflets) will help.