



Bladder Retraining

Bladder retraining is an effective form of treatment for an overactive bladder.

Symptoms of an overactive bladder include:

- **Frequency** - having to pass urine more than seven times in 24 hours, often passing volumes less than 200 milliliters (mls)
- **Urgency** - having to rush to pass urine with little or no warning
- **Urge incontinence** - not making it to the toilet in time and so becoming wet (this may be a few drops or a whole bladder full).

The aim of bladder retraining

The aim of bladder retraining is to learn to hold on and ignore the desire to pass urine so that you don't have to go to the toilet so often or in a rush.

A good drinking pattern will also help with your bladder retraining programme.

- Aim to drink 7-8 drinks of 200-250mls (½ pint mug) or 1½ - 2 litres of fluid spread out evenly during the day. With this pattern you will produce urine at a more regular rate and it will be easier for you to control.
- Try not to have drinks containing caffeine (coffee, strong tea, chocolate or cola) and cut down on alcohol and fizzy drinks. These drinks may affect your bladder control. If you are a tea or coffee drinker and choose to change to decaffeinated drinks, you should do this gradually by exchanging one caffeinated drink per day.
- Avoid blackcurrant juice as it is a bladder irritant and can affect bladder retraining.

Bladder Retraining Programme

Ways to help retrain your bladder are to:

- stand still or sit down
- cross your legs
- contract your pelvic floor muscles
- go on your tip toes
- count to 10
- think of something different
- tell yourself 'I am not going to the toilet'
- always be positive! When you can hold on for the period of time advised and remain dry, increase each time interval by another 15 minutes to 30 minutes (e.g. 1½ hours to 2 hours). Record your progress.

Remember that with bladder retraining, leakage or wetness may initially become worse when holding on - but try to persevere, as this will improve. Bladder retraining is a very effective treatment regime, but it may take weeks or even months to overcome the urge to pass urine and for you to gain confidence in your bladder control.

An alternative approach would be to attempt to hold on when you first feel the urge to go, wait

for 1 minute, then 2 minutes, then 5 minutes, etc - gradually increasing the time interval between visits to the toilet.

Other information

Sometimes medication may be prescribed to support your programme.

IT IS NOT ALWAYS EASY AND YOU NEED TO BE DETERMINED TO MAKE IT WORK
- SO DON'T GIVE UP!

Further useful information can be found at: www.nhsinform.scot

Further help and information

If you are experiencing continence issues, contact your GP or Community Nurse.

We are listening - how did we do?

We welcome your feedback, as it helps us evaluate the services we provide. If you would like to tell us about your experience:

- speak to a member of staff
- share your story at: www.careopinion.org.uk
- visit our website: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/feedback
- tel. 01851 704704 (ext. 2236), please leave a message on the answering machine if no one is available to answer.

