

BLADDER RETRAINING

Bladder retraining is a treatment for urinary incontinence that helps you “re-learn” normal bladder function and thus decrease or eliminate urine leakage. The goals of bladder retraining are to:

- a) increase the amount of time between voids (i.e., when you urinate or empty your bladder)
- b) increase the amount of fluid your bladder can hold and
- c) reduce any sense of urgency.

Bladder retraining instructions

1. Empty your bladder as soon as you get up in the morning.
2. Go to the bathroom every _____. (Your doctor or nurse will advise you about this. Usually it is about 2 hours.)
 - During waking hours, wait until your scheduled time before urinating. At that time, be sure to empty your bladder even if you feel no urge to urinate.
 - At night, go to the bathroom only if you awaken and find it necessary.
3. If you feel the urge to urinate before your designated time, try to suppress it. If possible, sit down or stand quietly until the sensation passes. Additional ways to control the urge include:
 - Relax the rest of your body and try to focus on another task to distract yourself.
 - Squeeze pelvic floor muscles quickly several times (Kegel exercises), but do not relax fully between squeezes.If you're able to suppress the urge, stick to your schedule. If you cannot suppress the urge, wait 5 minutes and then slowly make your way to the bathroom; then get back on your schedule. Repeat this process each time you feel an urge.
4. When you have accomplished this goal, gradually increase the time between trips to the bathroom by 15-minute intervals. If possible, aim to increase the time by 15 minutes every week until you reach a 3-4 hour voiding interval.
5. It should take you between 6 to 12 weeks to reach this goal, though you may have better days and worse days. As you continue bladder retraining you will start to notice more and more good days, so keep practising.
6. You may help speed up the retraining process by doing pelvic floor muscle exercises regularly.

Note: Be sure to keep a voiding diary for 1-2 days every week. This will allow you to monitor your progress and identify your problem times. If you are not improving after 6 weeks, return to your doctor/nurse and bring your voiding diary with you.

Adapted from: Luft J. Bladder retraining. UCSF Women's Continence Centre 1998

Available from:

URL:<http://www.ucsf.edu/cge/wg/programs/what/Bladder%20retraining.pdf#search=%22%22bladder%20retraining%22%20%2Bluft%22>

