



GOOD BLADDER HABITS FOR EVERYONE

Good bladder habits can help improve bladder control

Poor bladder habits can lead to poor bladder control. This includes wetting yourself. Here are some easy steps you can take to keep your bladder healthy.

Step 1 - Drink well

- ⇒ Have plenty of fluids. Fluid can include milk, juice and soup, however water is best
- ⇒ Cut down on how much caffeine and alcohol you drink. These may upset your bladder. There is caffeine in chocolate, milo, coffee, tea and fizzy drinks. Fizzy drinks include cola and sports drinks.

Step 2 - Eat well

- ⇒ Eat plenty of vegetables, fruit, legumes (beans), grains, nuts and seeds every day. This will increase your fibre and help you go to the toilet regularly
- ⇒ When increasing fibre in your diet, drink more water to help prevent constipation.

Step 3 - Be active

- ⇒ Keep active. Exercise for 30 minutes most days or as advised by your doctor or pelvic health physiotherapist
- ⇒ Physical activity such as brisk walking may help keep your bowel regular.

Step 4 - Look after your pelvic floor muscles

- ⇒ Keep your pelvic floor muscles strong with pelvic floor muscle exercises
- ⇒ Try to avoid putting extra strain on the pelvic floor muscles by maintaining a healthy weight and preventing constipation
- ⇒ See a pelvic health physiotherapist or nurse continence specialist to check that you are exercising your pelvic floor muscles the right way
- ⇒ Call the **National Continence Helpline 1800 33 00 66** and ask for information on pelvic floor muscle exercises.

Step 5 - Follow these toilet tips

- ⇒ It is normal to go to the toilet four to six times a day
- ⇒ You shouldn't get up to go to the toilet more than once a night, or twice if you are over 65 years of age
- ⇒ Do not go 'just in case'. Try to go to the toilet only when your bladder is full. Going to the toilet just before you go to bed is fine
- ⇒ Women should sit down to go to the toilet. Do not hover over the toilet seat. Your feet should touch the ground
- ⇒ Take your time. Relax when you are on the toilet. This helps your bladder to empty out fully. If you rush, you may not empty your bladder fully and over time you could get a bladder infection
- ⇒ Do not strain when using your bowels. This puts extra load onto your pelvic floor muscles and may weaken the muscles. The pelvic floor muscles help with bladder and bowel control.

Step 6 - Seek help

Seek help from your doctor, pelvic health physiotherapist or nurse continence specialist if you:

- ⇒ wet yourself when you cough, sneeze, laugh or lift, even if it is only a few drops
- ⇒ leak when you stand up or do sports or other activity
- ⇒ have an urgent need to pass urine and:
 - you have a strong feeling of not being able to hold on
 - you leak on the way to the toilet
 - you don't always get to the toilet on time.
- ⇒ pass small amounts of urine often through the day
- ⇒ have to get up more than once at night to pass urine. Overnight means during an eight-hour sleep
- ⇒ have trouble starting your stream of urine
- ⇒ have to strain to pass urine
- ⇒ have a stream that stops and starts instead of a smooth flow
- ⇒ feel your bladder is not empty when you have finished passing urine
- ⇒ feel burning or pain while passing urine
- ⇒ feel a need to give up things you enjoy because of poor bladder or bowel control, such as walking, aerobics or dancing
- ⇒ notice any change in your regular bladder habits that worry you.



Call the National Continence Helpline on 1800 33 00 66 (free call)

Speak with a nurse continence specialist for free and confidential advice on resources, details for local continence services, products and financial assistance.

For more information, you can also visit:

continence.org.au
toiletmap.gov.au
health.gov.au/bladder-bowel

This fact sheet is intended as a general overview only and is not a substitute for professional assessment and care.

This fact sheet is available in other languages from continence.org.au

