

Bladder Retraining

Goal of Bladder Retraining

The goal of bladder retraining is to return to a more normal pattern of urinating. This can result in better bladder control.

The program includes education about how your bladder works, urge control, record-keeping and following a schedule of urinating.

You will have success if you follow the schedule and keep follow-up appointments with your health care provider.

Retraining Program

- When you wake up each morning, go to the toilet and empty your bladder. Your voiding schedule will begin when you get out of bed in the morning and end when you go to bed at night.
- Your voiding schedule is every _____ minutes / hours. Follow this as closely as possible. The important part of retraining is that you practice telling your bladder when to empty and when to hold.
- Go to the toilet at the scheduled time even if you don't feel the need to urinate. The amount of urine you pass doesn't matter. It is important to relax and not strain when you urinate.
- If you feel the need to urinate before the scheduled time, use urge delay techniques.
- If your schedule gets interrupted, get back on schedule as soon as you can.

- After a period of urinating often, your bladder becomes used to emptying when there's a small volume of urine. Retraining the bladder will increase the volume of urine it is able to hold.
- Urine that is dark in color may irritate your bladder and make you feel like you need to urinate more often.
- Certain foods can also irritate your bladder and make you feel like you need to pass urine often. Talk with your health care provider for more information.
- When you start to drink more water, you may find the urge to urinate often is stronger. This will decrease as your bladder adjusts.

Working Through the Program

- Your goal is to go 3 to 4 hours between urinating.
- You will change the time between urination by certain minute or hour intervals.
- Keep a record every day to chart your progress. Use "Keeping a Record of Bladder/Bowel Function" for directions. Bring this to all of your appointments.

(over)

Tips to Control the Urge to Urinate

- Stop what you are doing and stand quietly or sit down. Try to stay as still as you can to maintain control.
- Do 5 to 6 pelvic floor contractions to suppress the urge.
- Think of something other than going to the bathroom. Think about a favorite vacation spot, count backwards, deep breathe or think positive thoughts. Say to yourself, “I can control my bladder” to help control the urge.
- Never rush or run to get to the bathroom. When the urge has ended, walk normally to the bathroom and urinate. Always feel “in control.”

If all the tips above don't work and you still have an overwhelming urge to go, you may go to the bathroom.

Tips for Success

- Avoid foods and beverages that irritate your bladder.
- Drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of water each day.
- Maintain regular bowel habits and a well-balanced diet.

Dealing With Problems and Setbacks

- Setbacks can happen if you are:
 - sick
 - tired
 - nervous
 - tense
 - sensitive to cold weather
 - sensitive to the sound of running water
 - about to start your period
 - unable to concentrate on the program.
- Decide what strategies work best for you and stick with it.
- The success of the program is to suppress the urge on a consistent basis. Be patient and stick with it.

When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if:

- symptoms of urgency continue
- you have pain when you urinate.