

## ***Bladder training: frequently-asked questions***

### **What is bladder training?**

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Bladder training is a way of teaching your bladder how to hold more urine and cut back on the number of times you need to pass urine (frequency). It also helps to stop urine leaking when you experience urgency (the sudden, uncontrollable need to pass water).

It is used to treat an overactive or unstable bladder which is responsible for the symptoms you are experiencing. If you have this condition the bladder contracts before you are ready to go to the toilet and this can happen especially if you get into the habit of going "just in case", as the bladder learns to hold a small amount.



### **How do I do bladder training?**

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Instead of your bladder controlling you, you must learn how to control your bladder. When you feel the urge to pass water, tell yourself that you are not going to. Try to distract yourself for five to fifteen minutes from the time you get the first urge (use whatever method best distracts you). If you do this for a week, every time you want to pass water, you should find that by the end of the week the urge to urinate is delayed. During the next week do the same thing and delay passing urine by a further five to fifteen minutes; by doing this your bladder will learn to hold more, and your symptoms will reduce.

Please be persistent and remember that your bladder is like any other muscle in the body and may require a few months training in order to reach its full potential.

## Is there anything else I can do?

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There are a number of things you can do to help the situation:

- Some people find that cutting down on drinks that contain alcohol or caffeine reduce their symptoms.
- Try to drink between 1.5 and 2 litres of fluid a day.
- Try not to become constipated.
- If leaking becomes a continuous problem then speak to your local continence specialist (Addenbrooke's continence advisor 01223 217465, Community continence advisor 01353 652145)
- Ask your doctor if any medications may help you if bladder training fails.



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*For your peace of mind*

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