

This leaflet should only be used by specific individuals along with a physiotherapy assessment. If you have any concerns, please contact your physiotherapist.

## Physiotherapy for overactive bladder

### Information for patients

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Bladder problems are most often “frequency” or “urgency” problems. These may affect your daily life.

#### **What is “frequency”?**

Frequency is when you go to the toilet to pass urine more than 8 times in 24 hours and more than once per night.

#### **What is “urgency”?**

Urgency is when you have very little warning of the need to pass urine. There may be times where you don't make it in time and leak urine.

#### **What causes bladder problems?**

Bladder problems can happen for many reasons.

- Anxiety
- Constipation
- Infection
- Drinking fluids containing caffeine or alcohol
- Medication
- Hormonal changes (menopause)
- Pregnancy/childbirth
- Pelvic surgery
- Prostate problems.

You are not alone- many people have this problem.

#### **Do you have any of the following bladder problems?**

- Strong, sudden need to pass urine (perhaps when you put your key in the door or when washing dishes)
- Sometimes leaking before you get to the toilet
- Are you always asking “where are the toilets?”
- Do you often pass only small amounts of urine when you go to the toilet?

If so there may be a simple problem with your bladder for which help is available.

#### **How to calm your bladder**

The techniques below will help you hold on for longer and also help you get to the toilet dry.

When the sensation of urgency comes on, try to stay calm and distract your mind by thinking of something else. Usually the sensation will pass after a few seconds.

You can also try any of the following:

- Curl up your toes by imagining you are picking up pencils
- Contract your pelvic floor
- Sit down on the edge of a chair
- Stop and stand still when you get the sensation of urgency
- Press your thighs together when standing- it is a little less obvious than crossing your legs
- Lift your heels repeatedly off the ground
- Repeat again if necessary.

### **What can I do to help myself?**

- Slowly cut down your caffeine and fizzy drinks intake (such as: coffee, tea, cola, Irn Bru and fizzy water)
- Try to drink 1½-2 litres daily- water is best
- Don't go to the toilet "just in case"
- Try to delay your time between visits to the toilet
- Don't panic; try to think of something else – distract yourself
- Give yourself plenty of time to empty your bladder when you go to the toilet. After you think you are finished take a few seconds to rock forward, sit back, move side to side, or even stand up, sit down to ensure you are finished and avoid leaking urine when you walk away.

### **Your Physiotherapist also recommends:**

After looking at your fluid volume chart we suggest you:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### **Pelvic floor exercises**

1. Gently squeeze and pull up your pelvic floor muscles, just for a second before relaxing  
Try to do \_\_\_\_\_ (max 10).
2. Gently squeeze and pull up your pelvic floor muscles.  
This time hold for \_\_\_\_\_ seconds (max 10).  
Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times (max 10).

Do these 2 exercises \_\_\_\_\_ times per day (max 5).

Try to do your pelvic floor exercises in different positions e.g. lying, sitting, and standing and in positions where you leak.

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