



Bladder and Bowel Service

Urinary Urgency/Urge Incontinence

Urinary urgency/urge incontinence are often symptoms of an over active or irritable bladder.

Urinary urgency is a sudden and desperate need to pass urine (go for a wee), which is difficult to ignore and can happen at any time during the day or night. This can cause you to pass urine frequently.

Urinary urge incontinence is having a sudden, desperate need to pass urine and uncontrollable leaks of urine before you can get to the toilet.

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What you can do to help improve your symptoms?

- Avoid constipation as this can often cause urinary urgency.
- Avoid going to the toilet on a just in case basis.
- Drink 3 - 4 pints / 1.5 – 2 litres (8-10 glasses of fluids) per day.
- Avoid the bladder irritants such as: caffeinated drinks, fizzy drinks, hot chocolate, energy drinks, fresh citrus juice, cranberry juice, tomatoes, citrus fruit, chocolate, artificial sweeteners (aspartame, saccharin), spicy food, chillies.
- Cigarettes contain nicotine which is a bladder irritant.
- Alcohol can make you pass more urine than usual and can also irritate the bladder.

Urge Control Techniques

When you get a sudden urge to pass urine, don't panic, stay calm. Try the following techniques to help you control the urgency:

- Contract your pelvic floor muscles.
- Sit on a firm chair until the urge goes away.
- Try to distract your mind, for example, read something or count to 100.
- Cross your legs or squeeze your inner thighs together.
- Go up and down on your toes/balls of feet when standing or sitting.
- Rotate your ankles if sat down.

Bladder Re-Training

The aim is to gradually increase the capacity of your bladder and the length of time in between each time you go to the toilet to pass urine.

'Hold on' when you get the urge to pass urine, try and hold on for longer (this may be anything from 1 minute to 15 minutes depending on you as an individual).

When you can do this easily gradually increase the time that you are holding for again. For example, try holding on for an extra 1 to 5 minutes before going to pass urine, then gradually increase the minutes to 10 minutes, then 20 minutes and so on.

Do this week by week until you are passing urine every 3½ - 4 hours or so.

Bladder training requires determination and perseverance. It will take time but with practice you should start to see a gradual improvement in your symptoms.



Contact us

**For further information
please contact:**

Bladder and Bowel Service

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Let us know what you think...

You can contact a CHCP Customer Care Advisor if you have a comment, concern, compliment or complaint by writing to:

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