

Understanding bladder control issues

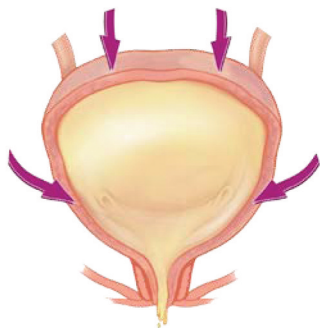
Urinary incontinence and its types

Your kidneys make urine, which is stored in your bladder. Certain muscles help keep urine in the bladder. That way you go only when you want to. But sometimes you may leak urine when you don't want to. Doctors call this urinary incontinence. Leaks may happen once in a while or more often. The 2 most common types of leaks are urgency and stress.



Urgency leaks

It's when you lose urine with a sudden strong urge to go and can't get to the bathroom in time. Urgency leaks may be called overactive bladder, or OAB. The main cause of OAB is bladder spasms. These spasms can create sudden strong urges to go.



Stress leaks

It's when urine leaks due to activities such as coughing, sneezing, or heavy lifting. This happens when the muscles that hold urine in the bladder are weak.

What you can do about urine leaks

There are many options that may help treat urine leaks. The tips given below can help with both urgency and stress leaks. While prescription pills may be needed for urgency leaks.

Your doctor can help find the right treatment for you. Complete the bladder diary on the back page to help the doctor know more about your leaks.

Tips for making the pelvic floor muscles (PFMs) stronger

Pelvic floor muscles (PFMs) help keep urine in the bladder. They can weaken with age or childbirth. Weak PFMs can cause both urgency and stress leaks. Just like other muscles, your PFMs also need exercise to get stronger. PFM squeezes can help control strong sudden urges and leaks.

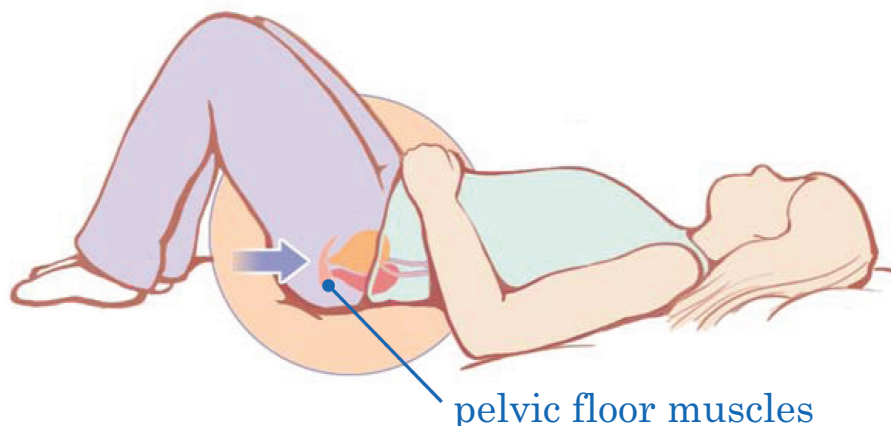
How to do PFM squeezes:

- To find your PFMs, think of the muscles you use to stop peeing. Or imagine trying to keep from passing gas.
- Once you've found these muscles, squeeze and hold them for a few seconds. Then relax for the same number of seconds.
- Over time, try to hold the squeeze for 10 seconds—then relax for a few seconds. Work your way up to 3 sets of 10 squeezes every day.

Once you can do a good squeeze, your PFMs will be able to help both urgency and stress leaks—even while you are still working to make them stronger.

- When you think you really have to go, try several quick, strong squeezes to stop the urgency.
- Squeeze your PFMs before you cough, sneeze, bend, or lift whenever you can.

It's a good idea to do these squeezes every day at the same time. Plus, you can do them anywhere. And don't forget: no one can tell you're doing these squeezes.



Helping to manage your symptoms

Tips to control urgency

When you feel strong sudden urges to go to the bathroom, don't panic. Take a few deep breaths and do 5 quick PFM squeezes. Then try to relax. Distracting yourself can also help. Think about something besides your bladder. For example, try reciting a poem from memory. Or counting backwards from 100.

Watch what you eat and drink

Some foods and drinks can bother the bladder and make symptoms worse. This list could help you learn what may bother your bladder.

Common offenders

- Tomato-based foods
- Spicy foods (jalapeños, hot sauces)
- Caffeinated drinks like coffee, tea, and soda
- Citrus fruits and juices
- Carbonated drinks
- Alcohol
- Artificial sweeteners

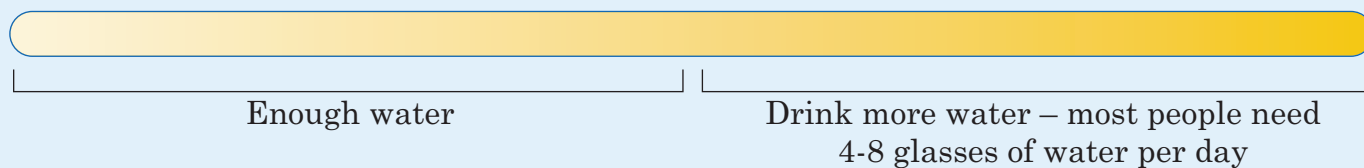
Foods and drinks to consider instead

- Pears, blueberries, bananas, and melons
- Fresh cheeses
- Potatoes, green beans, and broccoli
- Water
- Lettuce
- Fresh fish, chicken, and beef

Drinking enough

It's important to drink enough water for your health. Drinking enough water can help prevent conditions such as constipation. Constipation can make your urgency worse. You should drink enough to keep your urine light yellow.* Remember to check with your doctor before you make big changes to your fluid intake.

My urine color appears:



* This reference tool is not intended for medical diagnosis.

What else can you do for your urgency leaks?

- Ask your doctor if a prescription medicine is right for you.
- Give the medicine time to work.
- If you don't get any better after several weeks, talk to your doctor or nurse.

Your Bladder Diary

Use this diary to track your bladder habits for a day. Then bring it with you the next time you see your doctor. It may help him or her better understand your symptoms.

Your name: _____ Date: _____

Time	Drinks/Food What kind? How much?	Trips to bathroom How many times?	Accidental leaks How many?	Did you feel a strong urgency to go?	What were you doing at the time?
Sample	1 can of soda	2	1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Gardening
Morning				<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	
Afternoon				<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	
Evening				<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	
Overnight				<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	
Daily total:					

Questions to ask my healthcare provider:

[Disclaimer]



10%
TOTAL RECOVERED FIBER

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