

Bladder Training: Care Instructions



Your Care Instructions

Bladder training is used to treat urge incontinence and stress incontinence. Urge incontinence means that the need to urinate comes on so fast that you can't get to a toilet in time. Stress incontinence means that you leak urine because of pressure on your bladder. For example, it may happen when you laugh, cough, or lift something heavy.

Bladder training can increase how long you can wait before you have to urinate. It can also help your bladder hold more urine. And it can give you better control over the urge to urinate.

It is important to remember that bladder training takes a few weeks to a few months to make a difference. You may not see results right away, but don't give up.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

Work with your doctor to come up with a bladder training program that is right for you. You may use one or more of the following methods.

Delayed urination

- In the beginning, try to keep from urinating for 5 minutes after you first feel the need to go.
- While you wait, take deep, slow breaths to relax. Kegel exercises can also help you delay the need to go to the bathroom.
- After some practice, when you can easily wait 5 minutes to urinate, try to wait 10 minutes before you urinate.
- Slowly increase the waiting period until you are able to control when you have to urinate.

Scheduled urination

- Empty your bladder when you first wake up in the morning.
- Schedule times throughout the day when you will urinate.
- Start by going to the bathroom every hour, even if you don't need to go.
- Slowly increase the time between trips to the bathroom.
- When you have found a schedule that works well for you, keep doing it.
- If you wake up during the night and have to urinate, do it. Apply your schedule to waking hours only.

Kegel exercises

These tighten and strengthen pelvic muscles, which can help you control the flow of urine. To do Kegel exercises:

- Squeeze the same muscles you would use to stop your urine. Your belly and thighs should not move.
- Hold the squeeze for 3 seconds, and then relax for 3 seconds.
- Start with 3 seconds. Then add 1 second each week until you are able to squeeze for 10 seconds.
- Repeat the exercise 10 to 15 times a session. Do three or more sessions a day.

When should you call for help?

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- Your incontinence is getting worse.
- You do not get better as expected.

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