

Overactive bladder

We can help you regain control of your bladder

Your bladder has to store enough urine (wee) (between 250 – 500 milliliters) to allow you to do daily activities and have enough sleep.

When your bladder is filling up, the bladder muscle is relaxed. When the bladder starts to become hold on until it is convenient to go. When we decide to go to the toilet, the bladder muscles begin to contract. Adults usually empty their bladder every three to four hours during the day.

At night it is normal to need the toilet once. If you are over 60 years old you will probably find you get up to urinate more than once and by the age of 90 you may need to get up four times a night.

If you have an overactive bladder you may have some or all of the following symptoms:

- Urgency: you will suddenly need to go to the toilet immediately – and if you do not, you may leak urine
- Frequency: you will go to the toilet more than 8 times a day (doing a diary will help to assess this)
- Urge incontinence: you will have the feeling of urgency and don't get to the toilet in time

What you can do about it:

- Bladder training – see the following bladder training tips
- Reducing your caffeine, fizzy drinks, alcohol and other irritable food and drinks
- Aim to drink approximately 1.5-2L of clear fluids per day
- Avoid constipation
- If appropriate, sometimes prescribed medication might be necessary

Bladder training

- This helps to reduce the number of times you get up during the night
- Helps to stop urge incontinence

Bladder retraining requires you to hold on and not go to the toilet so often. Some people may get the urge when doing certain activities such as going into cold air, getting out of the car, opening the front door or running the tap. To help stop this urge try squeezing your pelvic floor and take time getting out of the car or back into the house.

If you wake up in the night with a strong urge to urinate, then use the toilet. As you progress you may be able to go back to sleep without getting up.

Tips to try

- Start to avoid going 'just in case'
- If you get the urge when entering the house, immediately come in and sit down
- Sitting down on a firm surface may help when you have a strong urge
- Distract yourself by; watch the television, write a list or count back from 100 – it may take your mind off thinking about the toilet
- Rise up and down on tip toes or 'scrunch' toes, to make your brain think about a physical activity rather than contracting your bladder
- Pinch your ear lobe between your fingers, to make your brain think of the discomfort not the 'urge' to go
- Always try to avoid going to the toilet on a strong urge
- Take controlled breaths and try to contract your pelvic floor
- When the urge has gone – If you think it is the right time to empty the bladder then calmly walk there – rushing will make the urge stronger and more likely result in a leak

Bladder and Bowel (Continence) Service

We provide a variety of specialist continence treatments and advice for anyone with bladder or bowel problems.

You do not need to be incontinent to receive treatment and support from us. For example, you may feel that you go to the toilet too frequently, or that your bladder or bowels are limiting your lifestyle.

Your GP or any other healthcare professional can refer you to our service.

Otherwise you can contact us directly to refer yourself to the service or, with your consent, a friend or relative can do this for you.

Call 0118 904 6540 10am to 2pm, Tuesday to Thursday

Email continence@berkshire.nhs.uk



www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/continence