

## **Bladder Irritants**

Some foods and beverages are known to irritate your bladder. By eliminating or reducing the amount of bladder irritants you drink or eat, you could improve your bladder urgency and the number of times you go to the toilet.

***Most people are not sensitive to ALL of these products. Try to find the foods and drinks that make YOUR urgency symptoms worse.***

### **Strong Bladder Irritants**

- **Caffeine** is both a diuretic and bladder irritant. Tea and coffee are equally irritating. After a caffeinated drink, you will produce more urine than the amount of fluid you drank and it will give you a strong urge to go to the toilet. A strong urge might be difficult to control. Some people are also sensitive to decaf coffee or tea.
  - Caffeine can also be in medications- check labels on over-the-counter medications and as well as with your pharmacist.
- **Carbonated beverages**- Bubbly drinks, especially diet pop, are particularly irritating. Diet Coke contains 3 irritants: caffeine, bubbles & artificial sweetener!
- **Alcohol** is also a diuretic and bladder irritant

### **Other known bladder irritants:**

- **Certain acidic fruits:**
  - oranges, grapefruits, lemons and limes, strawberries, grapes, peaches, pineapple and fruit juices
  - cranberry juice (more than 1 cup a day)
  - tomato-based products
- **Spicy foods** (ex: hot chili peppers)
- **Chocolate**
- **Vinegar in large quantity**
- **Cigarettes and all tobacco products**
- **Vitamins C and B.** Try buffered vitamin C & B
- **Artificial sweeteners** (ex: Aspartame (Equal, Nutrasweet) and Splenda)

## **Bladder Irritants**

**Why these items sometimes cause irritation isn't exactly understood, and what causes bladder irritation may vary from person to person.**

### **How to figure out which foods/drinks are irritating your bladder:**

If you think any of the foods/drinks you consume are causing you to experience urgency and frequency:

1. Choose only one item and reduce or eliminate it from your diet.
2. Do this for at least a week.
3. Pay attention to any improvements in your urgency, or the frequency of using the toilet. If you are using the toilet less often and don't need to rush to the toilet as much, then you know the food/beverage is probably a bladder irritant for you.
4. If you do not notice any changes to your daily urinary habits, then you may consider re-introducing this item into your diet
5. Go back to Step #1 with a different item.

**Tip:**

*If you suspect coffee might be a bladder irritant, reduce it by one cup per week. Suddenly stopping coffee might cause headaches, so it's best to reduce coffee gradually.*