

Getting Control of Urinary Urgency

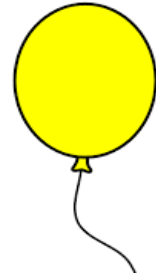
Your bladder (aka: detrusor muscle) causes urgency

Think of your bladder like a round balloon.

Your bladder muscle forms the walls of your bladder.

When the muscle squeezes, you'll feel an urge to go to the toilet.

- If it just squeezes a little, you'll feel like you need to go soon.
- If it squeezes strongly, you'll feel like you need to find a toilet RIGHT NOW (urgency).



There are many reasons why we feel urgency

- Drinking coffee, tea, any caffeinated drinks or alcohol. Unfortunately, these produce urine that irritates the bladder.
- Drinking a lot, especially in a short period of time.
- Not emptying your bladder completely. Your bladder fills up faster if it wasn't emptied well the last time you urinated.
- Constipation. There is less room for the bladder to expand when bowel is full.
- Weak pelvic floor muscles (PFM). When these muscles are strong they calm down your bladder muscle and reduce the feeling of urgency. But if your PFM are weak they don't do a good job of keeping your bladder muscle calm.
- Tight or overactive pelvic floor muscles (PFM). When these muscles are constantly contracted under the bladder, they irritates it, increasing urge.

What to do when you feel urgency

- Step 1: Calm down the urgency.
- Step 2: Decide if it's time to go. If it is, walk to the toilet with control (no rushing!)

Step 1: How to calm urinary urgency. URGE CONTROL TECHNIQUES:

- Sit down if you can
- Stay calm. Take some deep breaths. The urge will soon pass soon.
- Tighten up your pelvic floor muscles & hold strongly for 5 seconds. Relax and right away do this again 5 times.
 - Every time you tighten you PFM strongly, you send a message to the bladder muscle telling it, "Calm down. Just relax."
 - As your pelvic floor muscles get stronger this message will get stronger.
- In your mind talk to your bladder muscle: firmly: "STOP IT!" / "YOU WILL WAIT", gently: "SETTLE DOWN" / "CALM DOWN" / "LET ME THINK ABOUT IT"

OTHER URGE CONTROL TECHNIQUES:

- Press your fingers where the urine comes out. Try this at home.
- Squat so your heel presses into your perineum (genital area). You can pretend you are looking at something on the ground or doing up your shoe.
- Rub the back of your thighs firmly as if you have an itch.

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- Rise up and down on the balls of your feet a few times

Step 2: Decide if it's time to go:

- When was your last urination?
 - Less than 30-60min ago?
- When did you drink last? What did you drink?
 - Was it a Bladder Irritant?
 - Did you gulp it all down?
- Liquids usually take 45-60min to reach the bladder. If you gulped it down, the urgency is real. If you had a BI the urgency is real. But if it was NOT a BI and you drank it slowly, the urgency is NOT REAL (the bladder does not need to empty itself).
- Remember, the bladder is a reservoir. It is a disservice to keep emptying it all the time.
- Use the Urge Control Techniques to help you in your bladder training.

Become aware of what triggers urgency

- Arriving home or arriving at work?
- Turning on a tap or shower?
- Seeing a toilet or washroom?
- Walking down the freezer aisle of the supermarket?
- Being outdoors in cold, wet weather?

Be prepared for urgency

Begin your URGE CONTROL TECHNIQUES before you encounter your trigger (example: a few minutes before you arrive at home), or as soon as you feel the slightest urge. Don't wait for the urge to get stronger.

The more you practise your urge control techniques the better they'll work for you.

Tips to reduce urgency

- Reduce or eliminate caffeine or other bladder irritants
- Limit or avoid bladder irritants before exercise, or if you're going out
- Dress warmly in cold or wet weather
- Avoid constipation
- Do your pelvic floor muscle exercises so they can calm urgency better
- Go to the toilet every 2 to 4 hours in the daytime. Don't wait longer even if you feel you can
- Double void every time you empty your bladder
- Drink a normal amount of fluid every day, appx 6 – 8 cups. Water is best
- Your urine should be a pale yellow colour. If it's dark yellow then you need more water. If it looks like water (no colour) then you're drinking too much
- Spread your drinks through the day. Don't drink a lot at one time
- Avoid drinking in the evening and before bed
- See your family doctor if urgency is a problem