

GETTING BACK CONTROL

Solving 'Urge Urinary Incontinence'

Urge Urinary Incontinence?

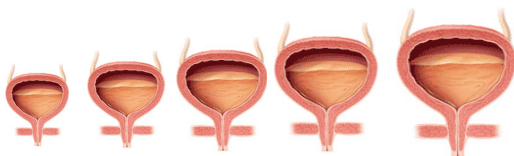
Urge Urinary Incontinence is the term used to describe the loss of bladder control that specifically occurs when someone has a strong sensation of needing to pass urine and is trying to get to a toilet. This type of urinary leakage is quite different to that which might occur when you cough, sneeze, laugh etc (termed *Stress Incontinence*), because the underlying anatomical problem is actually quite different.



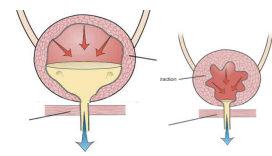
Gaining Control Step 1: Understanding Normal Bladder Function

When we consume fluid it is first transferred to our bloodstream. It then travels to our kidneys where it is converted into urine, and then travels down to our bladder where it is stored. As the volume of urine increases in our bladder, the wall of our bladder should stretch to accommodate (a bit like a balloon expanding as you blow air into it). It is this stretch of the bladder wall that gives us a mild, *gradually* increasing urge to pass urine. Only when we sit on the toilet is our bladder meant to squeeze to push the urine out.

Normally the bladder wall stays relaxed and expands as urine enters from the Kidneys



Bladder Wall contracts when we are on the toilet



What Causes Urge Urinary Incontinence?

There can be many reasons why a person might not experience the normal gradually increasing mild urge to pass urine, and instead, experiences a sudden onset, uncontrollable urge that results in urinary leakage. Medical research has shown that one of the reasons for this strong, uncontrollable urge is that some people experience involuntary bladder spasms whilst their bladder is filling, a condition called 'detrusor overactivity'. Your physiotherapist has given you this handout because after assessing your condition they believe this may be contributing to the urinary incontinence you are experiencing.

Sometimes the bladder can have 'spasms' (involuntary contractions) whilst it is filling.



Getting Back Control

Step 1: Lifestyle & Diet Modification

Dietary modifications are often one of the simplest ways to reduce the degree of detrusor overactivity you experience, and improve your symptoms of urge urinary incontinence. Your physiotherapist will guide you on which of the following changes may be helpful in your particular circumstance.

1. Altering the Total Amount of Fluid You Consume each Day

Both 'Too Much Fluid' and 'Too Little Fluid' can worsen urge urinary incontinence. For example, it is known that a rapid expansion of the bladder is more likely to cause bladder spasms than a slow expansion. Drinking too much fluid causes your kidneys to produce urine at a very fast rate, increasing the chance you will have a bladder spasm. Conversely, drinking too little fluid can make your urine very concentrated and irritate the inside of the bladder wall.

YOUR FLUID INTAKE GOALS

1st Week: Aim to drink _____ per day
2nd Week: Aim to drink _____ per day
3rd Week: Aim to drink _____ per day



2. Reducing Your Caffeine Intake

Caffeine is found in drinks such as coffee, tea, sports drinks and many soft drinks. It is also found in certain foods such as chocolate. For some people caffeine can cause bladder spasms to be much stronger than usual and occur at smaller bladder volumes than they normally would. Reducing your caffeine may reduce the degree to which you experience urgency and leakage on your way to the toilet. It is important to note however, if you currently consume a large amount of caffeine it is important to reduce your intake gradually so that you do not experience headaches etc.

CAFFEINE INTAKE GOALS

1st Wk: No more than ____ per day
2nd Wk: No more than ____ per day
3rd Wk: No more than ____ per day



3. Reducing Your Artificial Sweeteners

Artificial sweeteners found in *diet food and drinks* are also known to irritate the bladder in some people, increasing the intensity of bladder spasms. Attempting to reduce your intake of artificial sweeteners may also reduce your urgency incontinence symptoms. Diet soft drinks in particular should be avoided.



4. Alter how you consume your fluid – space your fluid through the day!

Some people avoid drinking fluids during work or when out and about, and then drink large quantities in a small amount of time to make up for it. Drinking a large volume in a short space of time will also encourage your bladder to suddenly fill quickly. It is better to space your fluid through the day. But be careful..... carrying a drink bottle and sipping constantly through the day will mean that you end up drinking more than you need to!