

# Bladder Drills

**T**he purpose of a bladder drill (timed voiding) is to gradually:

- Increase the length of time between urinations
- Increase the amount of fluid your bladder can hold
- Diminish the sense of urgency and/or leakage you experience.

Keeping a diary of your bladder activity is helpful to monitor your progress. Be sure to talk to your physician about this problem before you begin the program.

It might be a good idea to start this program on a weekend, or when you plan to be at home or near a bathroom. It is very important to drink a minimum of eight glasses of fluid each day (80 to 100 ounces of fluids daily). Drinking the right amount of fluid daily and emptying your bladder at regular intervals helps to decrease bladder infections. Managing your problem by limiting fluid intake is counterproductive and is not recommended.

- **Days 1 to 3:** After awakening, empty your bladder every hour on the hour, even if you do not feel the need to go. Make sure you are drinking frequently. During the night, only go to the bathroom if you awaken and find it necessary.
- **Days 4 to 6:** Increase the time between emptying your bladder to every 1½ hours, following the above fluid intake and night-time instructions.
- **Days 7 to 9:** Increase the time between emptying your bladder to every 2 hours, following the above fluid intake and night-time instructions.
- **Days 10 to 12:** Increase the time between emptying your bladder to every 2½ hours, following the above fluid intake and night-time instructions. Work up to emptying your bladder every 3 to 3½ hours.

You will be the best judge of how quickly you can advance to the next step. These instructions

are an outline. You can change the timing; for example, you may find it more comfortable to increase the interval from 1 to 1¼ hours.

You may also increase the pace of this schedule, depending on your individual symptoms and bladder capacity. For example, you may increase the hourly increments every 2 days instead of every 3 days.

A helpful hint: If you feel a sense of urgency, try contracting your pelvic muscles (Kegel exercises) quickly two or three times. Focus on relaxing all other muscles. If possible, sit until the sensation passes; then slowly make your way to the bathroom.

Using a diary to keep track of your progress in bladder drills is also a good idea. Keeping a written record is often a helpful way to make behavioral changes. A diary shows you the value of the effort you're making.

*Drinking the right amount of fluid daily and emptying your bladder at regular intervals helps to decrease bladder infections.*

*This patient handout was provided by Dorothy Kammerer-Doak, MD, associate clinical professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque; and urogynecologist, Lovelace Health Systems, Albuquerque, NM.*

