

Bladder Retraining

Bladder retraining is a behavioral treatment for urinary incontinence that uses scheduled toileting to help you relearn normal bladder function. The purpose of bladder retraining is to

1. Increase the amount of time between emptying your bladder
2. Increase the amount of fluids your bladder can hold
3. Diminish the sense of urgency and/or leakage associated with your problem

Keeping the diary of your bladder activity is very important. This helps to determine the correct starting interval for you and to monitor your progress throughout the program.

Bladder Retraining Instructions:

1. Empty your bladder as soon as you get up in the morning. This begins your retraining schedule.
2. Go to the bathroom every _____. Wait the full amount of time before you urinate again AND when it is your scheduled time; be sure to empty your bladder even if you feel no urge to urinate. Follow the schedule waking hours ONLY. During the night time go the bathroom only if you awaken and find it necessary.
3. A helpful hint: when the urge to urinate is felt before the next designated time, use the “urge suppression” technique described on the pink handout or try relaxation techniques like deep breathing. Focus on relaxing all other muscles. If possible, sit down until the sensation passes. If the urge is suppressed, adhere to the schedule. If you can’t suppress the urge, wait 5 minutes then slowly make your way to the bathroom; then re-establish the schedule. Repeat this process each time an urge is felt.
4. When you have accomplished this goal, gradually increase the time between emptying your bladder by 15 minute intervals. Try to increase your interval each week, but you will be the best judge of how quickly you can advance to the next step. The time between each urination is increased until you reach a 3-4 hour voiding interval.
5. It should take between 6-12 weeks to accomplish your goal. Don’t be discouraged by set-backs. You may find you have good days and bad days. As you continue bladder retraining you will start to notice more and more good days, so keep practicing.
6. You will hasten your success by doing pelvic muscle exercises faithfully every day. Your diaries will help you see your progress and identify your problem times.
7. We are here to help and support you. Be sure to keep your regularly scheduled visits. If you need more help, medication or other treatments are available and may be useful.