

NHS Forth Valley

Bladder Drill

Information for Patients
Physiotherapy Women's Health

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of two light blue, wavy, ribbon-like shapes that curve upwards and meet at a point in the center, creating a stylized wave or bridge effect.

Introduction

The main function of the bladder is to store urine. It can store 300-500ml at one time. On average, you will pass around 1,500ms (3 pints) per day and for bladder comfort, it is recommended that you pass about 300-400ml each time, making a normal daily frequency of 6-8.

Frequent toileting greater than 8 times makes you and your bladder adapt to this, meaning you go too often. Frequency less than this may suggest you are not drinking enough. Frequency (going too often) and urgency (unable to hold on) can affect your quality of life. A vicious cycle is then entered as these symptoms make you go to the toilet more frequently.

However, this problem is not a disease, only a loss of normal physiological function. Bladder training to regain normal function can be re-learned, just as one learned it as a child.

The following bladder drill may assist you in gaining better bladder control by increasing bladder capacity and improving your ability to make it to the toilet.

Bladder Drill

1. If you feel the urge to go, attempt to 'hold on' as this is vital for success.
2. Try tightening your pelvic floor muscles to assist this. Sitting on a hard surface, e.g. chair or desktop, can also help.
3. You are trying to increase the time between toilet visits.
4. Continue to progress as each new toileting target is reached, e.g. holding for 2 minutes, then 5 minutes.

5. The final aim is a frequency of about 6-8 per day with a total output of about 1,500ml per day.
6. You must not restrict your fluid intake. In fact, maintaining a good fluid balance will encourage an improved bladder capacity. Your physiotherapist will advise you on how much you should be drinking per day. It is usually about 2 litres depending on your activities.
7. Success is less likely if your bladder drill is being run concurrently with a busy and/or stressed lifestyle. Try and reorganise your weekly schedule if this is the case.
8. If toileting at night is a problem, this should reduce as toileting targets are reached. Avoid drinking a lot prior to going to bed, as this will help.
9. Good pelvic floor muscle strength is important in preventing or reducing urinary incontinence. The Pelvic Floor Muscle Exercises should therefore, be done concurrently.
10. If you are on bladder medication, this along with your efforts should improve bladder control and confidence.
11. In summary, self-motivation is the key to success and to assist you with this, it is important that you keep your appointments with your physiotherapist.

If you can't go let us know!

Every month around 2,000 people across Forth Valley fail to turn up for hospital appointments. This costs the NHS millions of pounds each year and increases waiting times. So if you are unable to attend or no longer require your hospital appointment please let us know so we can offer it to someone else.

We are happy to consider requests for this publication in other languages or formats such as large print. Please call **01324 590886 (9-5) to arrange this or email **FV-UHB.disabilitydepartment@nhs.net****

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NHS Forth Valley
Administration Offices
Westburn Avenue, Falkirk FK1 5SU
www.nhsforthvalley.com

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