



Behavioral Therapy for Urinary Incontinence

Bladder Training

Normally there should be 3-4 hours between trips to the bathroom. If your body gets used to urinating more frequently than this, the bladder “thermostat” gets set at a low volume. This will give you the urge to urinate more frequently, even when your bladder is not full.

The goal of bladder training is to help you gain control over your urinary frequency, which is done by training your bladder to hold more urine. It is possible to increase the amount of time between each urination but it will require some practice.

If you urinate more often than every 3-4 hours, try to wait 5-10 extra minutes when you feel the need to urinate. Initially you may have accidents, but try to be persistent with the bladder retraining. Your bladder will get used to holding a larger volume of urine.

If you get the urge to urinate before your scheduled time, try taking slow, deep, relaxing breaths until the urge fades or try to get busy with something to take your mind off going to the bathroom.

Instruction to Reduce Urgency

When you experience a sudden urge to empty your bladder:

- Stop and stand very still. Sit down if you can. You may need to remain very still to maintain control.
- Relax (especially your stomach muscles) – Take a deep breath – Let it out.
- Squeeze and relax your pelvic floor muscles quickly 4-5 times. This is also called a Kegel exercise. This will help to override the urge to urinate by sending a message to the bladder to relax and hold urine.
- When you feel the urge decrease walk normally to the bathroom. If the urge comes back on the way to the bathroom, stop and repeat the above instructions.

Practice the technique frequently. Control may not be immediate, but with time and practice your urgency and frequency will decrease and you will develop more control.