

BLADDER RE-TRAINING FOR OVERACTIVE BLADDER SYMPTOMS

Rationale

Women with OAB symptoms worry constantly that they may not be able to access a toilet when needed. The feeling of urgency can strike at any moment and lead to embarrassing leakage – because of this, women with OAB always know where the nearest toilet is. These women visit the toilet before leaving the house and again on arriving at the shops, “just in case”, when they do not really have the urge to go. Although this seems a good idea to prevent leakage, constant emptying of the bladder prevents the bladder from filling up. Eventually, if it is not being used, your bladder begins to shrink, further exacerbating the OAB symptoms. Bladder re-training aims to reverse this vicious cycle and restore bladder capacity.

Bladder re-training regime

Bladder re-training aims to restore healthy bladder habits and provide advice to help women to “hold on” during abnormal periods of urgency.

- **MINIMISE CAFFEINE INTAKE** – max 1-2 cups of tea/coffee per day
- Not drinking will not help – **DRINK 1.5-2 LITRES OF FLUIDS DAILY**
- There must be **2 HOURS BETWEEN VOIDS**. If you can an abnormal urge to urinate sooner you must try and hold on:

*-**SQUEEZE YOUR PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLES**, which tilts the bladder neck upwards to prevent leaking*

*-**SIT DOWN AND CONCENTRATE**, the bladder spasms usually last 2 minutes and will pass*

*-Even if you think you might leak, **DO NOT GO TO THE TOILET UNTIL 2 HOURS HAVE PASSED***

- Gradually, as your bladder capacity improves, we will aim to increase the time between voids
- If women have a very poor bladder capacity to begin with, it may be necessary to start at shorter intervals than 2 hours and gradually work upwards
- Being able to squeeze your pelvic floor muscles when needed relies on you regularly exercising those muscles and keeping your pelvic floor strong. This may be helped by referral to an experienced pelvic floor physiotherapist initially, to instruct you on the best technique for pelvic floor exercises.
- If women find the bladder spasms unbearable and are unable to hold on, certain medications to help relax the bladder may help. Dr. Colin Walsh will discuss the most suitable OAB medication for you.



"Hello, incontinence helpline - can you hold?"