

Bladder and bowel conditions can affect anyone



This booklet could be your first positive step to a full and active life

1. Introduction
2. A healthy bladder
3. The most common problems
4. How to keep your bladder healthy
5. A healthy bowel
6. Functional incontinence
7. Who can help
8. Frequency volume charts
9. Ongoing issues

Keeping a healthy bladder and bowel is very important but men and women of all ages and backgrounds can be affected with problems.

For some people, talking about bladder and bowel problems is not easy and they keep these problems hidden. Many people suffer alone and in silence because they are too embarrassed to seek help or do not know how to get help.

Bladder and bowel problems can affect not only the individual but also their family and friends, and can stop people from leading a full and active life.

This booklet aims to

- ◆ Help you understand what is normal
- ◆ Help you keep your bladder and bowel healthy
- ◆ Enable you to identify and manage your bladder or bowel problems
- ◆ Help you understand when you need to seek help
- ◆ Tell you where you can go for help, advice, to discuss treatment options or just to talk

2. A healthy bladder

What is a Healthy Bladder pattern?

If your bladder is healthy, you will normally pass large amounts of light straw coloured urine between five and seven times in twenty-four hours. You should not feel a strong urge to reach the toilet and should be able to hold on until you reach it. It is normal to go to the toilet once at night.

Symptoms of an unhealthy bladder

There are different types of bladder problems. You might find that you are caught short and do not have enough bladder control to stay dry. In the medical world these problems are called 'Urinary Incontinence'. This is a complaint of involuntary loss of urine. (International Continence Society - 2009)

3. The most common problems

◆ **Stress Incontinence**

Leaking - for example when you cough, sneeze or do exercise

◆ **Urgency**

Urgency - the strong desire to pass urine which is difficult to put off

Urge incontinence - not being able to get to the toilet in time before passing urine

◆ **Frequency of micturition**

Passing urine more than ten times in a twenty-four hour period

◆ **Retention of urine**

Not being able to empty your bladder.

Symptoms include:

- Hesitation on passing urine
- Needing to push or strain to start
- A weak or altered urine stream
- Dribbling urine
- Feeling that you have not completely emptied your bladder

◆ **Functional Incontinence**

- Difficulties with understanding eg: that might be caused by learning difficulties or dementia
- Mobility problems
- Difficulty in accessing a toilet e.g. upstairs or in a small space

4. How to keep your bladder healthy

Drink enough of the right type and amount of fluid



Do drink six to eight cups of fluid per day. (About three pints or 1500 ml)



Do drink more water, fruit juice and squash with no added sugar



Do drink decaffeinated tea and coffee as an alternative



Do drink fruit and herbal teas but avoid nettle, dandelion and marshmallow as these herbs can irritate the bladder and bowel



Limit drinks that contain lots of caffeine, for example tea, coffee, cola and energy drinks, as they may irritate your bladder and bowel



Limit the amount of alcohol you drink. If you do drink alcohol, try to alternate between alcoholic and soft drinks to prevent bladder and bowel irritation

4. How to keep your bladder healthy

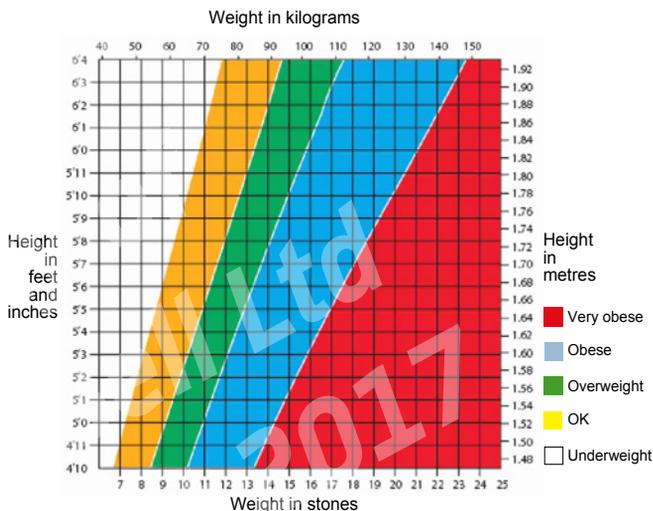
Drink enough of the right type and amount of fluid

Try to avoid getting constipated

Constipation may cause your bowel to stretch and press against the bladder, making your symptoms worse. For advice on keeping your bowel healthy, see the section on “A Healthy Bowel” (Page 14)

Try to maintain a healthy weight

Being overweight can put pressure on your bladder. Your GP can provide weight management advice and details of services that can help you manage your weight.



Ask a health care professional or pharmacist whether your medication or medical condition can affect your bladder.

4. How to keep your bladder healthy

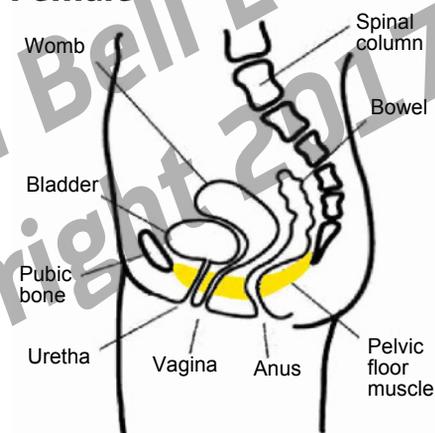
Exercise your pelvic floor muscles on a daily basis

The diagrams show the pelvic floor muscles which stretch like a hammock from the pubic bone at the front to the bottom of the spine. These muscles support your bladder and bowel.

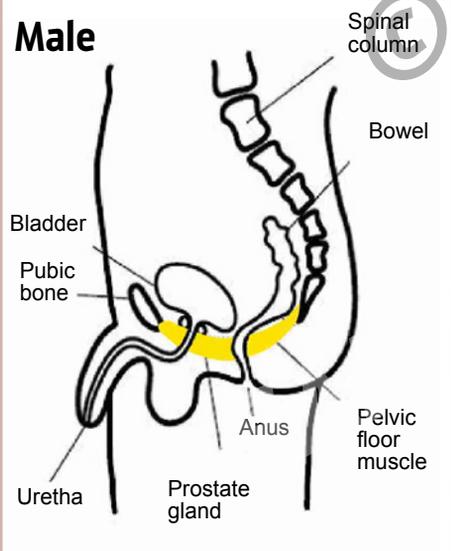
In men there are two openings through the pelvic floor muscles - the anus (back passage) and the urethra (bladder outlet). In women there is also a third opening for the vagina (birth canal).

4. How to keep your bladder healthy

Female



Male



The pelvic floor muscles support these openings, but if they are weakened they cannot support the openings effectively. This may mean that you leak some urine at times, for example with coughing, sneezing or laughing. This is called Stress Urinary Incontinence (SUI). SUI is extremely common and can affect men and women of all ages, although it is more common among women.

Weakness of the pelvic floor can be caused by constipation or pelvic surgery but in women the most common causes are childbirth and the menopause.

Many people with this problem can be helped and in some cases can be cured completely.

4. How to keep your bladder healthy

4. How to keep your bladder healthy

Finding your pelvic floor muscles

Tighten and pull up the muscles around the back passage – as if you are trying to stop yourself from passing wind.

Now imagine that you are about to pass water and picture yourself trying to stop the flow of urine.

You should be able to feel the movement of your pelvic floor muscle internally.

Slow Pull Up

Slowly tighten and pull up the pelvic floor muscles, from the back towards the front as hard as you can – this is a slow pull up. Hold the squeeze for as long as you can (up to 10 seconds) and then relax the muscle. Relax for 3 or 4 seconds before trying another pull-up. Start with doing these 5 times and increase the number gradually (up to 10 times).

Fast Pull Up

Now pull the muscles quickly and tightly, and then relax them immediately. These are fast pull-ups. Again, start with doing these 5 times and increase the number gradually (up to 10 times).

Tips:

- ◆ Practice slow and fast pull up exercises at least 3 times per day to make the muscles stronger. Do not actually do the exercise while passing urine
- ◆ Don't hold your breath
- ◆ Avoid tightening your buttocks, leg and upper tummy muscles whilst you are doing your exercise
- ◆ Stop exercising if your muscles begin to ache - you have done enough. Take a break

Retrain your bladder

Bladder retraining is a treatment for 'urgency' or 'urge incontinence'. This is when you pass small amounts of urine very frequently and sometimes leak urine if you are unable to reach the toilet in time. The aim of bladder retraining is to help your bladder hold a normal amount of urine (500ml or one pint) and regain a normal pattern of passing urine. There is a three-day bladder and fluid chart at the end of this booklet to help you keep track of your bladder pattern at the end of this booklet. Once you have filled the chart in, try to retrain your bladder using the advice on page 11. Within a few weeks, you should see an improvement in your bladder pattern.

Please fill in this chart everyday for a minimum of 3 days.

4. How to keep your bladder healthy

4. How to keep your bladder healthy

Bladder and Fluid Chart

- ◆ In the 'Drinks' column, keep a record of what you drink in 24 hours, when and how much. Measure and record all fluids using a plastic jug in mls
- ◆ In the 'Urine' column, keep a record of how many times you go to the toilet, when and how much urine you pass. You can use a measuring jug for this at home to measure amounts in mls. Record using the chart at the end of this booklet.

Tips for 'holding on'

- ◆ When you first try holding on, sit on a hard surface, like a toilet lid, for a few minutes
- ◆ Recite a poem or song to keep your mind off your bladder
- ◆ Read a page of a book, magazine or newspaper
- ◆ Try and visualise your bladder stretching
- ◆ Try not to go to the toilet 'just in case'
- ◆ Be positive
- ◆ Take each day at a time. Bladder retraining does work but it can take some time

Bladder retraining – What do I have to do?

- ◆ Using the bladder and fluid chart, monitor the times you pass urine, how much you drink and how often you leak urine over a period of at least three days
- ◆ Once you have your three-day chart, try to hold on for an extra five minutes each time you need to pass urine
- ◆ Once you are comfortable holding on for an extra five minutes try holding on for ten minutes
- ◆ Slowly increase the time you hold on for

Getting Help and Treatment

There are a lot of treatments that can be tried, to help you manage your bladder problem. If you find yourself with any of the following symptoms, then you should seek help:

- ◆ Leaking urine
- ◆ Urgency to go to the toilet
- ◆ Going to the toilet often
- ◆ Not emptying your bladder properly

Or

If you have difficulties with understanding or severe physical impairment that prevents you getting to the toilet.

5. A healthy bowel

5. A healthy bowel

What is a Healthy Bowel habit?

If your bowel pattern is healthy, you will pass faeces (poo) between three times per day and three times per week – both are normal. Your bowel pattern may be slightly different and this may be normal for you. Your faeces should be soft and passed easily without pain.

Symptoms of an unhealthy bowel

◆ **Constipation**

Having bowel movements less than three times per week. Faeces are hard, there may be pain on passing faeces and you may feel the need to strain

◆ **Faecal Impaction**

If constipation is not treated, the bowel can become packed with hard faeces that you are unable to pass. You may experience a lot of tummy pain, feel sick and/or your appetite may decrease. This can be confused with diarrhoea because you may pass some liquid faeces

◆ **Diarrhoea**

Faeces are loose and watery and you may feel the need to go to the toilet frequently and urgently

◆ **Bleeding**

If you are bleeding from your back passage, seek medical advice

Getting Help and Treatment

If you find yourself with any of the following symptoms, then you should seek help as soon as possible:

- ◆ Passing blood in your faeces
- ◆ Change in bowel habit
- ◆ Persistent unexplained diarrhoea
- ◆ Abdominal pain
- ◆ Passing runny mucus instead of faeces
- ◆ Pain when going to the toilet
- ◆ A lump in your abdomen
- ◆ Significant unexplained weight loss
- ◆ Passing loose faeces when you run, walk or are in bed

How to keep your bowel healthy

3 healthily

A balanced diet will help prevent bowel problems and keep you healthy. People who have a diet that is low in fibre or “roughage” may be more likely to have bowel problems. Foods high in fibre include fruit, vegetables, wholemeal bread and cereals. You should:

- ◆ Eat five portions of fruit and vegetables per day
- ◆ Aim to eat 2-3 portions of oily fish per week
- ◆ Aim to eat 2-3 portions of dairy per day

5. A healthy bowel

- ◆ Reduce Fat
- ◆ Reduce Sugar
- ◆ Reduce Salt
- ◆ Eat at regular intervals e.g. breakfast, lunch and tea
- ◆ Aim to drink six to eight cups of fluid per day

The types of food that you should be eating to achieve a healthy, balanced diet.



5. A healthy bowel

Go to the toilet regularly

It is important to go to the toilet to open your bowels (have a poo) as soon as you feel the need. Give yourself plenty of uninterrupted time to sit on the toilet. You need to sit upright with your feet firmly on the floor. Use a step if needed. It is important not to strain too much but to allow the faeces to pass naturally.



Check whether your medication can affect your bowel

Some medicines can cause constipation, most commonly painkillers like codeine and morphine, and anti-depressants, diuretics (water tablets) and iron pills. If you think that your constipation might be caused or affected by your medicines, talk to your healthcare professional or pharmacist about possible alternative medication or solutions to the constipation.

5. A healthy bowel

Be active

Regular activity can help to improve bowel movement. Adults should undertake at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on 5 or more days of the week. This could include activities such as:

- ◆ Walking to and around the shops
- ◆ Taking the dog for a walk
- ◆ Swimming
- ◆ Chair-based exercise

Contact your local health improvement service for further advice.

Bowel Cancer Screening

Bowel cancer is the third most common cancer in the UK. The NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme aims to detect bowel cancer early, when you have no symptoms and treatment may be more effective. If you are aged 60-69 and are registered with a GP, you will be offered the chance to do the test in the privacy of your own home every two years.

6. Functional incontinence

Could you have functional incontinence?

- I struggle to walk to the toilet and sometimes have an accident
- I struggle to get my clothes up and down when I am at the toilet
- I am sometimes forgetful and forget to go to the toilet or forget where the toilet is and then have an accident
- I struggle to get to the toilet because of its position in my home
- I find walking and/or getting out of the chair and/or getting out of bed difficult

If you have answered **YES** to any of the questions above you may have functional incontinence. Please tick the functional incontinence box on the outside back cover of this book if you would like help with this.

An Occupational Therapist can help with aspects of functional incontinence by seeing you in your own home environment and can suggest pieces of equipment. The page opposite shows some examples of what can be provided.

6. Functional incontinence

7. Who can help?

Raised toilet seat
with grab rails



Chair raising units



There are a number of people who can help you to obtain general help and advice:

- ◆ Your GP
- ◆ Your Practice Nurse
- ◆ Nurse Practitioner
- ◆ Your District Nurse
- ◆ Your Physiotherapist/ Occupational Therapist
- ◆ Your Local Continence Service

Female hand held urinal



Male hand held urinal



Female travel urinal



Male Travel urinal



Bladder and Bowel Foundation

SATRA Innovation Park
Rockingham Road
Kettering
Northants NN16 9HH

Nurse helpline for medical advice:

0845 345 0165

Counsellor helpline:

0870 770 3246

General enquiries:

01536 533255

Fax:

01536 533240

Email:

info@bladderandbowelfoundation.org

www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org

7. Who can help?

8. Frequency volumn chart Day 1

Promocon

A national service offering product information, advice and practical solutions for adults and children.

Redbank House,
St Chad's Street,
Manchester.

M8 8QA

Telephone: 0161 834 2001

www.promocon.co.uk

RADAR

Their National Key Scheme (NKS) offers independent access to around 7,000 locked public toilets around the country.

12, City Forum,
250 City Road, London.

EC1V 8AF

Telephone: 020 7250 3222

www.radar.org.uk

Local NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme

Telephone: 0800 707 6060

www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk

Name _____

Date started _____

	Drinks	Urine	Bowels
6 am			
7 am			
8 am			
9 am			
10 am			
11 am			
Midday			
1pm			
2pm			
3pm			
4pm			
5pm			
6pm			
7pm			
8pm			
9pm			
10pm			
11pm			
Midnight			
1 am			
2 am			
3 am			
4 am			
5 am			

8. Frequency volumn chart Day 2

Name _____

Date started _____

<i>Drinks</i>	<i>Urine</i>	<i>Bowels</i>
6 am		
7 am		
8 am		
9 am		
10 am		
11 am		
Midday		
1pm		
2pm		
3pm		
4pm		
5pm		
6pm		
7pm		
8pm		
9pm		
10pm		
11pm		
Midnight		
1 am		
2 am		
3 am		
4 am		
5 am		

8. Frequency volumn chart Day 3

Name _____

Date started _____

<i>Drinks</i>	<i>Urine</i>	<i>Bowels</i>
6 am		
7 am		
8 am		
9 am		
10 am		
11 am		
Midday		
1pm		
2pm		
3pm		
4pm		
5pm		
6pm		
7pm		
8pm		
9pm		
10pm		
11pm		
Midnight		
1 am		
2 am		
3 am		
4 am		
5 am		



SAMPLE COPY
Property of
Hayward Bell Ltd
© Copyright 2017

SAMPLE COPY
Property of
Hayward Bell Ltd
© Copyright 2017