

Bladder training

Gynaecology

Many people experience bladder problems, such as needing to urinate frequently, a sudden urge to urinate, or urine leakage. Bladder training can help you manage your bladder signals more effectively. Through a series of exercises, you can unlearn unwanted habits and gain better control over your bladder. Research has shown that many people benefit from bladder training.

Purpose of bladder training

Bladder training helps you increase the time between visits to the toilet, improve bladder capacity, and better manage feelings of urgency. It can also help if you tend to delay urination for too long and therefore pass large amounts of urine at once.

An important part of bladder training is learning to recognise and understand your bladder signals. You will learn to better distinguish between a full bladder and an urge that does not require an immediate visit to the toilet.

Bladder problems and poor bladder habits often develop gradually over months or years. Improving bladder function therefore takes time, patience, and perseverance. Many people notice improvements within a few weeks, but it may take several months before optimal bladder control is achieved. Before starting bladder training, your doctor will have ruled out other possible causes of your symptoms (such as a bladder infection).

Bladder diary

Before starting bladder training, you will keep a bladder diary for several days. In this diary, you record how often you urinate, how much urine you pass, how much you drink, and whether you experience urgency or urine leakage. By comparing the bladder diary before and after treatment, you can monitor your progress.

During bladder training, we aim for approximately 2 litres of fluid intake per day (unless your doctor advises otherwise) and an average of 7 visits to the toilet per day. We also recommend limiting alcohol, caffeine, tea, and diet drinks containing aspartame. These substances can irritate the bladder and worsen existing symptoms.

Bladder training

1. Increase the time between toilet visits

Check your bladder diary to see how often you go to the toilet. If you urinate more often than every 2 to 3 hours, you can start practising by gradually increasing the time between toilet visits. For example, if you go to the toilet every hour, try waiting 1 hour and 15 minutes instead. If this is successful for 2 to 3 days, you can gradually increase the interval further. Continue building this up until you go to the toilet approximately every 3 hours.

Also try to reduce toilet visits that are out of habit or "just in case". Ask yourself whether it is necessary to urinate, for example before leaving the house. A healthy bladder can normally hold about 400 ml of urine.

2. Reduce urgency using urge suppression techniques

When you suddenly feel the urge to urinate, it is important not to give in immediately. By bringing the urge under control first, you help your bladder function more effectively again.

You can use several techniques:

- Tighten your pelvic floor muscles firmly and hold the contraction until the urge decreases.
- Tighten your pelvic floor muscles several times in quick, strong contractions.
- Cross your legs or sit on a firm chair to apply pressure to the area between the vagina and anus (the perineum).
- Distract yourself, for example by counting backwards or thinking about something else.
- Change your position if this helps reduce the urge, for example by leaning slightly forward.
- Remain seated and stay calm when the urge suddenly occurs, paying attention to your breathing.

Many people find that the urge subsides on its own after a short period of time.

3. Avoid behaviour that increases urgency

Some reactions can further stimulate the bladder. Therefore, try:

- Not to run to the toilet when you suddenly feel the urge to urinate.
- Not to rock, fidget, or shift from side to side.
- To remain seated calmly until the urge decreases.

4. Teach your bladder to signal at the right time again

Do you still not feel the urge to urinate after 2 to 3 hours? Then go to the toilet anyway and try to urinate. In some people who regularly hold their urine for long periods, the bladder only signals that it is full at a late stage. By going to the toilet at regular intervals, you can help your bladder learn to signal earlier when it needs to be emptied.

5. Do not strain while urinating

Try not to push or strain your abdominal muscles while urinating. The bladder is a muscle that should empty itself naturally. Straining can interfere with normal bladder function and may lead to symptoms such as difficulty emptying the bladder or abdominal pain.

Resuscitation

All patients at DC Klinieken will be resuscitated in an emergency situation. If you have a “do not resuscitate” statement, or if you have discussed with your doctor that you do not want to be resuscitated, it is important that you inform us.

Emergency after visiting DC Klinieken

In case of an emergency, call: 088 0100 998.

Insurance

DC Klinieken has contracts with all health insurers. This means that almost all care is reimbursed, just like in the hospital. You do need a referral from your (general) doctor. Please be aware of your own deductible. More information about reimbursements and possible exceptions can be found at: www.dcklinieken.nl/vergoedingen.

Questions

For more information and answers to frequently asked questions, go to: www.dcklinieken.nl/contact or contact our Service and Information Centre at 088 0100 900.