

## What is Overactive Bladder?

Sometimes a bladder problem isn't just annoying. For many men, it's a medical condition that needs treatment.

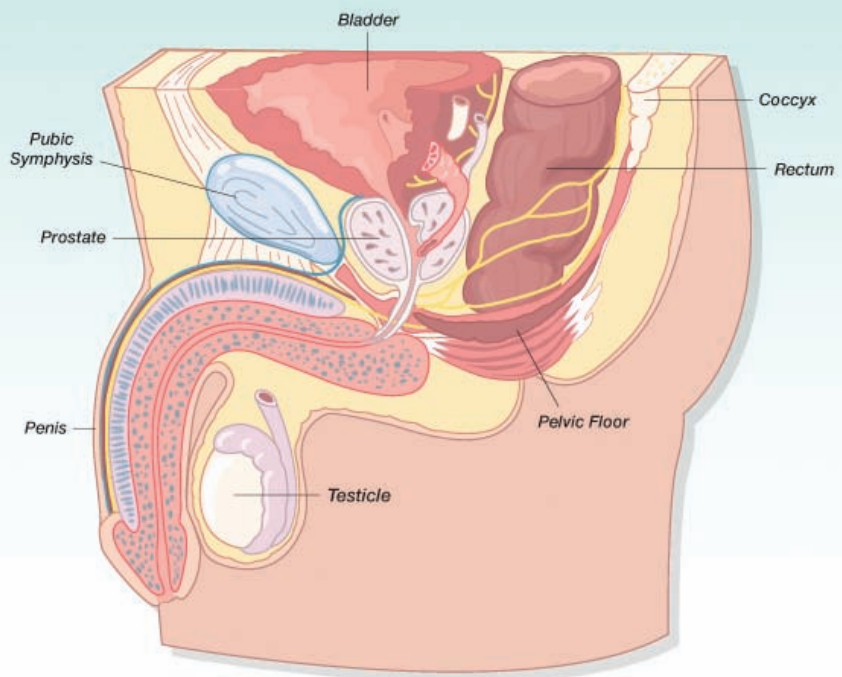
The bladder muscle can squeeze too often, or when you don't want it to. (Like when your bladder's not full.) This condition is called overactive bladder. Symptoms include:

- Often going more than 8 times in 24 hours
- Sometimes waking up at night to go
- Strong, sudden urges to urinate (urgency)
- In some cases, wetting accidents

Certain prostate problems may cause the same symptoms as a bladder problem. That's why your doctor may ask you questions or perform tests to decide what's causing your symptoms—and the right treatment.

Some men may suffer from both bladder and prostate problems. If that's the case, you may need to be treated for both. **Treating just one of the problems may not help relieve all symptoms.**

### Male Lower Urinary Tract



Use this diagram in discussion with your doctor.

## What can I do?

If your doctor determines that you have overactive bladder, there are many options that may help. They include:

- Simple changes to your lifestyle
- Medications
- Bladder training
- Pelvic floor muscle exercises (“Kegels”)

Most patients use more than one of these options to succeed. Some changes seem like common sense, but they can have a big impact on your life. (Even if you have tried one of these in the past, you may find a combined approach works best.)

When you start treating a bladder problem with medicine and other changes, you may notice improvement in just 2 or 3 weeks. But be patient! Most people improve even more over the next 12 weeks. Then, to maintain relief, keep following your doctor's directions. That means taking your medicine daily!

**If you have any questions, be sure to ask your doctor.**

## Bladder Training

This plan will help you regain control of your bladder.

**GOAL:** Urinating no more than every 3 or 4 hours during the day.

Do your best to follow the same schedule each day during waking hours. You may need to get used to the idea that you can wait longer before going.

- Urinate each day when you get up. And each night before you go to sleep.
- Try to increase your time between bathroom visits during the day. Do you go every hour now? Try to wait 1 hour and 15 minutes.
- When you can wait that long without a problem for 1 or 2 weeks, try to increase the time. Try 15 minutes more first. Then, little by little, wait longer.
- Stick to your timing as much as you can, whether or not you have to go.
- Have a strong urge to go before your scheduled time? Use the control tips below to put off going until the scheduled time.

### Control Tips

- Perform 5 quick, strong, pelvic muscle contractions. They'll help calm the urge. (See Kegel exercises below.)
- Try to distract yourself:
  - Count backwards from 100 by 7s.
  - Sit down and take 5 deep breaths. Focus on your breathing, not your bladder.

## Pelvic Floor Muscle Training

Often called “Kegel” exercises. They can strengthen the muscles that help hold urine in the bladder.

- 1 Imagine that you are trying to control passing gas.
- 2 Tighten your rectum for a count of 3.
- 3 Then fully relax the muscle for a count of 3. (You should try to control both the tightening and the relaxing of the muscle.)
- 4 Repeat 10 to 15 times. Do these at least 3 times a day.

## Lifestyle changes that can help

**Watch how much you drink:** Some people try to drink less to reduce symptoms. But this can concentrate urine. That can irritate the bladder and make you constipated.

How much fluid you need each day depends on how much you sweat (from heat or being active). Most people should drink 4 to 6 cups of fluid a day. At least half of your fluids should be water.

**Avoid food and drinks that may bother your bladder:**

- Coffee and drinks with caffeine
- Artificial sweeteners
- Citrus drinks (like orange or grapefruit juice)
- Fruits, especially citrus
- Carbonated drinks (like soda)
- Spicy foods (like salsa)

**Try to stay regular:** Normal bowel activity is an “easy” nonpainful movement at least every other day. Avoid straining to empty your bowels. Eat fiber, drink enough and exercise to help stay regular.

**Watch your weight:** If you're overweight, weight loss can improve symptoms.

**Stop smoking:** Chemicals from smoking can irritate the bladder.