

## **BLADDER RETRAINING**

This instruction sheet explains how to retrain the bladder to increase the time between bathroom visits (for those going too frequently) and help control the urge to urinate.

## BLADDER RETRAINING

Bladder retraining will increase the time between bathroom visits and help you control the urge to urinate.

1. Keep a record of how much you drink and how often you empty your bladder. Measuring the amount of urine you pass is very helpful. The record should be kept for 1 to 3 days.
2. A health professional should review the record and find the average time between bathroom visits.
3. Start by scheduling bathroom visits an extra 15 minutes apart. For example, if you were going to the bathroom once every hour on average, start with a schedule of 1 hour and 15 minutes (during the daytime).
4. If you get the urge to go to the bathroom before the next scheduled visit, you should not rush to the bathroom, but stay calm, sit or stand still.
5. You should try to stop the urge to go:
  - Take a deep breath. Relax. Breathe slowly.
  - Squeeze the pelvic floor muscles quickly. Do 5 to 10 squeezes.
  - Distract yourself. For example count backwards from 100 or do something else.
6. Once the urge is gone, you should wait until the next scheduled bathroom visit. If the urge returns before then, you should repeat steps 4 and 5.
7. When you are able to maintain the schedule without accidents in between, increase the schedule by another 15 minutes. (It may be possible to increase the schedule by 30 minutes instead of 15. A timer may help to remind you to keep your schedule.)
8. Keep working at the above until you can last for a period of time between bathroom visits that is convenient for you.

## TIPS

Bring your completed bladder record when you meet with your health professional. It will help both of you determine your best treatment plan.

Drink 5 to 8 cups of fluid per day. You may find that avoiding tea, coffee, chocolate, colas or alcohol helps you. These may irritate the bladder and cause the urge to empty your bladder.

Along the way, don't worry if you have to go to the bathroom occasionally before the set time. Keep at it! Improvement may take several months.

These are just guidelines. Everybody is unique, and different people may find their own "tricks" which work for them.