

SPHERE Bladder and Bowel Service

Impact of Fluids on the Bladder

Many urinary symptoms can be helped or cured with simple lifestyle changes.

First, it is important to understand a bit about the individual's bladder habits and the best way to do this is to keep a bladder diary like the one below.

Fluid and Bladder Diary Example

Fluid In			Urine Out		Comments		
Time	Type of Drink	Amount (in mls)	Time	Amount (in mls)	How urgent 1-3 (3 = most urgent)	Leakage: Damp Wet Soaked	Activity at time, e.g. reaching front door
07.00	Coffee	200mls	06.30	400mls	3	Damp	On way to toilet
10.00	Tea	200mls	07.30	100mls	2	Damp	Coughing
1pm	Cola	200mls	08.30	100mls	3	Damp	On way to toilet
Totals		600mls	Totals	600mls			

What is the diary for?

The diary will give important information about the bladder. It shows how much the bladder holds, how often the bladder is emptied and any leakage. It also shows the amount and types of fluids taken.

How long should a bladder diary be kept?

For three days and nights, ideally in a row. Use a different diary for each day, starting first thing in the morning, upon getting up.

What will be needed to complete this?

A measuring jug, bladder diary and pen.

How is it completed?

For urine: every time the bladder is emptied urine should be passed into a jug, then place the jug onto a level surface and read, in millilitres (mls) how much urine it contains. Write the time and amount in the diary, then flush the urine down the toilet and rinse the jug.

If unable to measure the urine (e.g. when out at shops), write the time and tick the urine column and write small, medium or large if possible.

For drinks: every drink should be measured. Write down the time (remember you don't drink and pass urine at the same time), the amount and type of drink (e.g. tea, cola, water) in the diary. It is easier to measure all cups, mugs etc. that will be used during the three days, so you know in advance how much they hold.

For urgency: write down how strong the urge to empty the bladder was:

1 – slight urge

2 – strong urge

3 – very hard to hold on

For leakage: any time there is a urine leak, whatever the amount, write down the time and degree of **leakage:** damp, wet or soaked. In the activity column write down what was happening (**activity**) at the time, e.g. a cough, sudden movement, on the way to the toilet or reaching home.

What should be avoided?

Please don't change any habits until after filling out the diary. Drinks should be the same as usual and visits to the toilet should be as normal – this will show the true pattern of how the bladder is behaving.

Making changes

The information below will help to identify what might be causing the bladder symptoms. Only change one habit at a time – it will be easier to identify what changes are helping. If, after a few days there is an improvement, carry on with this change and others individually to the change already made. Keep another bladder diary for three days after making changes, this will show whether the changes are working.

Change the type of fluid

Drinks with caffeine in them, such as most fizzy drinks, energy drinks, tea and coffee can irritate the bladder and cause the body to produce more urine. This can lead to the need to pass urine more often and more urgently, including during the night. To reduce caffeine intake, this should be done gradually over a few days to avoid the risk of caffeine withdrawal headaches. Try replacing caffeinated drinks with non-caffeine or low-caffeine drinks, e.g. decaffeinated tea or coffee, fruit teas, water or juice (not cola or irn bru). This should be tried for 2 weeks before deciding whether there has been any improvement to symptoms.

Change the amount of fluid taken

Fluid intake includes liquid foods such as soup, ice-cream and the milk in cereal. This fluid can be any type and does not have to be just water – most drinks are made with water!

The chart below can be used as a guide as to how much fluid should be taken based on weight:

Weight (stones)	Weight (kilograms)	Mls per day	Fluid oz	Pints	Mugs
6	38	1190	42	2.2	4
7	45	1275	49	2.5	5
8	51	1446	56	2.75	5-6
9	57	1786	63	3.1	6
10	64	1981	70	3.5	7
11	70	2179	77	3.75	7-8
12	76	2377	84	4.2	8
13	83	2575	91	4.5	9
14	89	2773	98	4.9	10
16	102	3136	112	5.5	11

N.B. The general daily recommended fluid intake is 1,500 – 2,000mls. If fluid intake is going to exceed this always check with a doctor first – there may be a medical condition that will influence the amount of fluid an individual can take in.

Changing the timing of drinks

If bothered by the need to get up at night to pass urine, it might be helpful to stop drinking 2-3 hours before going to bed. However, this may not be effective for older people as the body makes more urine overnight in older people and **when** they drink does not seem to affect this.

If an individual stops drinking, the amount of fluids taken in overall can be reduced and this can cause dehydration, constipation and make the mouth dry and sore. It can also make bladder symptoms worse. It is better to sip small amounts of fluid rather than stop all fluids after a set time in the evening. Try sucking ice cubes or ice-lollies.