

Improving your bladder health

Bladder problems are common as you get older, but there are many ways to control or manage your bladder health. Use this checklist to guide your discussion with your healthcare provider so that you get the most out of your next appointment.

Please notify your doctor if you have experienced any of the following symptoms. The greater your openness about the symptoms you are experiencing, the better.

- ☐ Leaking of urine from the bladder.
- ☐ The urge to go to the bathroom more often.
- ☐ Pain with urination.
- ☐ Blood in the urine.
- ☐ Cloudy urine.
- ☐ Difficulty starting to urinate or having a weak stream.
- ☐ Urinary issues disrupting sleep patterns.
- ☐ Noticeable change in color, smell, appearance, or volume of urine.
- ☐ Difficulty emptying your bladder.

Questions to ask your doctor

- ☐ What are my treatment options?
- ☐ Should I follow a fixed urination schedule?
- ☐ Should I keep a log of my bladder activity? What should be included in this log?
- ☐ Are there bladder training exercises that you recommend to improve my urinary issue?
- ☐ Do I need medication to control my bladder problem?
- ☐ Are there any dietary changes that you recommend?
- ☐ Are there other lifestyle steps I can take to manage my urinary issue?

My lifestyle challenges

- ☐ Avoid waiting to go to the bathroom.
- ☐ Stay active. Incorporate pelvic muscle exercises to help strengthen the muscle of the pelvic floor.
- ☐ Reduce or stop smoking.
- ☐ Maintain or aim for a healthy body weight.
- ☐ Follow a healthy eating pattern rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and lean protein.
- ☐ Large amounts of stool in the colon can put pressure on the bladder. Avoid constipation by eating a fiber-rich diet and drinking plenty of water.
- ☐ Some foods may irritate the urinary tract and make symptoms worse. Try keeping a food log to identify potential trigger foods.
- ☐ Keep a diary of how often you urinate, how much urine you pass, and record any urine leakage if recommended by your health care provider.
- ☐ Be aware of your barriers and challenges to managing your urinary issue. Speak to your doctor about these challenges.

Notes:

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/how-talk-your-doctor-about-sensitive-issues>

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