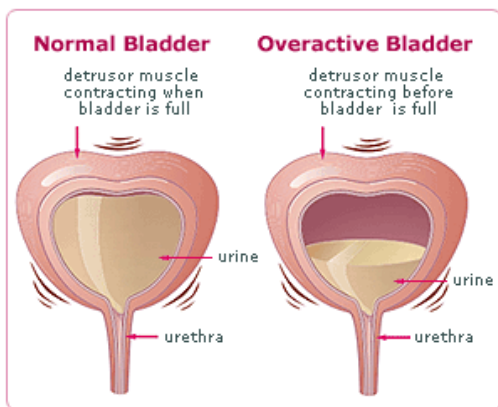


## Bladder Training

### *The overactive Bladder*

An overactive bladder is when you feel the need to go to the toilet very frequently (8 or more times in 24 hours) and this need is associated with a feeling of urgency meaning you often need to rush to the toilet.

The bladder muscle normally contracts when your bladder is full, telling you that you should go find a toilet. If your bladder is functioning normally, you are usually able to ignore this initial sensation and make your way to a toilet, then allow the bladder muscle to fully contract. You have made it to the toilet either with a full bladder or less than full bladder. Causes of OAB can be varied, including; constipation, poor diet (poor bladder habits, infection, inflammation, foreign body or a tumor).



Treatment includes management by a trained medical practitioner and qualified physiotherapists. Bladder and bowel habit changes, medication and occasionally surgery may be indicated in your management.

### **Behavioral changes.**

1. Implement correct bowel habits and dietary changes required to maintain soft stools. Always use correct motion technique (See information sheet).
2. Ensure adequate fluid intake and good bladder habits (See sheet about Fluid intake and bladder habits).
3. Bladder retraining is the technique used to try to increase the capacity of your bladder and decrease the sensitivity (See opposite page).

## Bladder Retraining

*Aim to increase the time between voids (urinating) by deferring the urge.*

It is normal to urinate every 2-4 hours depending of course on the volume of fluid you have drunk.

Firstly you will need to complete a bladder diary to find out more about your voiding patterns and volumes. This will give you lots of information about how much your bladder can comfortably hold and how what you eat or drink can affect your bladder capacity and the “urges” your feel. Caffeinated drinks and alcohol can trigger your “urge to go”.

From your bladder diary you will discover what is the maximum comfortable time you can go between voids. Using this maximum time as your baseline you will then plan on aiming to only urinate after this time has lapsed. For example if your maximum comfortable time was 2 hours you would aim to void very 2 hours. The below techniques are strategies you can trial to help defer the urge.

### Urge control techniques

- Use perineal pressure with the hand or by sitting on the edge of a chair or table.
- Sitting on a rolled towel first thing in the morning as the feet hit the floor
- Crossing the thighs
- Squeezing your buttocks
- Curling your toes or stretching your calves
- Doing a pelvic floor contraction or lower tummy draw in. Either one long sustained maximal contractions or shorter maximal contractions.
- Use distraction – counting backwards from 100 by 7s
- Push back legs into hard object
- Rub the skin between your upper lip and your nose

Throughout your bladder training it is advisable to go to the toilet after the second urge as accidents can occur if you continue to delay the urge in the early stages of retraining. Once you are able to comfortably maintain this time for 3 consecutive days you can aim to increase the time by 15 or 30 minutes.

These techniques will train your bladder to store more urine without giving uncomfortable urges. As a result you will experience longer times between voids and this will give you more freedom to live life. The bladder retraining program usually takes around three to six months to experience permanent changes.

If you require any further information or would like to book in to see one of our continence physiotherapist please contact us.

<i>Hoppers Crossing:</i>	333 Old Geelong Rd,	9369 4999
<i>Altona North:</i>	Bayfit Leisure Centre, Cnr Mason and Mills Street.	9392 2288
<i>Taylor's Lakes:</i>	Medical One Medical Centre, Cnr Sunshine Ave & Keilor Melton Hwy	9390 8488.