

## GOOD BLADDER HABITS

<p><b>Why do we need good bladder habits?</b></p>	<p>Approximately 1000000 Australians suffer from incontinence (bladder control problems). Poor bladder habits can actually lead to loss of bladder control.</p>
<p><b>What is considered normal?</b></p>	<p>The average adult bladder can hold between 300 and 500 millilitres of urine before it needs to empty. It is normal to pass urine from four to six times during the day and perhaps once at night. Urine should flow easily without discomfort in a good, steady stream until the bladder is empty. As we get older, our bladder capacity gets smaller (300 to 400 millilitres) and we need to pass urine more frequently; up to eight time per day, then once at night.</p>
<p><b>What are good bladder habits?</b></p>	<p>Follow these five simple steps to maintain good bladder habits:</p> <p><b>Step 1 Maintain a good fluid intake</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Try to drink at least six to eight glasses of fluid per day (1500 millilitres or more) unless advised otherwise by your doctor.</li> <li>➤ Limit the amount of caffeine you drink; that is, don't drink too much coffee, cola, soft drinks or tea. (Instant coffee contains less caffeine than percolated coffee. Tea contains less caffeine than coffee and soft drinks).</li> <li>➤ Limit the amount of alcohol you drink as it increases urine production. Alcohol also makes it difficult for the brain to co-ordinate bladder control.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 2 Practice good toilet habits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Take your time when emptying your bladder.</li> <li>➤ Make sure you empty your bladder completely each time you pass urine.</li> <li>➤ Avoid going to the toilet "just in case" as this tends to result in the bladder developing a small capacity. Try to only go when your bladder is full. (However, emptying your bladder before going to bed is fine).</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 3 Maintain good bowel habits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Keep your bowels regular and avoid constipation</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 4 Look after you pelvic floor muscles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Keep the tone in your pelvic floor muscles with regular exercise. Walking and pelvic muscle exercises.</li> <li>➤ Keep your weight down. Being overweight is just an extra load for your pelvic floor muscles to carry.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 5 Seek help if you have difficulty with any of the above steps.</b></p>