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## **Bladder Training**

### **Urinary Incontinence**

Loss of urine can come from several sources. **Urge Incontinence** is loss of urine from uncontrolled contractions of the bladder. Loss of urine with sneezing, jumping or other activities is called **Stress Urinary Incontinence (SUI)** and is caused by the bladder dropping out of its normal location in the pelvis. Bladder training can reduce most types of incontinence. The goal of bladder training is to reduce the amount of urine in the bladder, decrease bladder “irritability”, and strengthen the muscles that prevent loss of urine. Try the following steps to see if your loss of urine can be reduced.

#### **1. Avoid foods and beverages that irritate the bladder:**

Caffeine (soda, coffee, tea, and chocolate) and alcohol are both diuretics and cause the bladder to increase its activity. Replace these items with water. Increasing your water intake does not increase urine loss!

#### **2. Timed Voiding:**

The emptier you keep your bladder the better! Try to never delay voiding – if you need to go, GO! Timed voiding takes this a step further by having you void every hour on the hour. This not only reduces the amount of urine in the bladder but also helps the bladder to “tone” its muscle. Use your phone or buy a cheap digital timer and set it to go off every hour and try to urinate whether you need to or not. After a few days at one hour you can try 1.5 then 2 hours.

#### **3. Double Void:**

Double voiding helps to empty the bladders as completely as possible. Once you have finished urinating stand up and count to ten. Sit back down and void again. The ten second delay allows the bladder to contract and void the “left over” urine. The emptier the bladder is kept the less likely you are to loose urine!

#### **4. Kegel Exercises**

Kegel exercises are designed to strengthen the muscles in the pelvic floor that help to keep the bladder from dropping and leaking when you cough or sneeze. Find the muscles by placing two fingers in your vagina and tightening your vaginal muscles around your fingers (these are the same muscles you can use to stop your flow of urine). Once you have identified the muscles contact them and hold to a count of three. To have an impact on incontinence you need to try to do 10 sets of 3-second “contractions” or squeezes of these muscles 10 times a day.

#### **5. Weight loss and smoking cessation:**

Pressure (i.e. weight) on the bladder will worsen urine loss. Similarly, frequent coughing (smokers, asthma, allergies) and heavy lifting will worsen urine loss by straining the pelvic muscles and pushing the bladder down. Anything you can do to reduce these forces (i.e. quit smoking, lose weight, see an allergist, get help lifting...) will decrease your urine loss.