

A few things you can do to help your bladder



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER

1 Reduce or eliminate specific foods and beverages that irritate your bladder. **AVOID** the following foods/ beverages:

| FLUID | example / comment | FOOD | example / comment |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------------|--|
| Caffeinated beverages | Coffee, sodas such as Coke & Pepsi™ are irritating and cause your kidneys to make lots of urine. Even decaf coffee has tannic acid, which can irritate your bladder. | Tomatoes | Including any tomato products |
| | | Spicy foods | Curry, MSG (Mexican, Indian, Thai, Chinese foods) |
| | | Sugar | |
| Tea | Including ice tea | Honey | |
| Alcoholic beverages | Alcohol is both diuretic (causes you to make more urine) and irritating to your bladder | Chocolates | This includes puddings & cakes |
| | | Corn syrup | |
| Cranberry juice | Can worsen urinary frequency because of its acidity | Aspartame/ Saccharine | Read food labels. Many foods contain artificial sweeteners (like NutraSweet®) |
| Milk | | Citrus fruit & juices | Orange, lemon, grapefruit, etc. |
| Carbonated drinks | Even Sprite, decaffeinated Coke and etc. | Excessive dairy products | Yogurt, sour cream |
| Vinegar | | Aged cheeses | Especially soft brie-type or hard cheeses |
| | Preservatives (citric acid, bezol alcohol) | Natural diuretics | Cantaloupe, watermelon, asparagus, cucumber, causes your body to make more urine |
| | Artificial ingredients and food colors | Most nuts | Almonds, cashews and pine nuts are okay |

- Not all of the above foods/beverages are irritating to all bladders. Identify what irritates your bladder by eliminating all of them and then slowly reintroducing them one day at a time until you identify the irritant.
- You **CAN HAVE** these beverages and foods:

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Water | Frozen yogurt | Meats (avoid aged, canned or processed meat) |
| Decaffeinated tea & some herbal teas | Potatoes | Almonds, cashews and pine nuts |
| Apple and pear juice | Some breads (avoid sourdough and rye) | Garlic |
| Non-citric juices | Poultry | Rice |
| Grape juice | Fish | Pasta |
| Blueberries and pears | American cheese, cottage cheese | White chocolate |

2 Quit smoking

- Nicotine is not only colorless, addictive and poisonous to your body, it can cause unnecessary bladder contractions.
- Smokers also have higher risk of complications after surgery and may not heal as well.
- Chronic smokers have very bad lungs. Coughing exerts downward, damaging pressure on the bladder and pelvic floor.
- Cigarette smokers have a higher risk for bladder cancer.

3 Drink appropriate amounts of fluid

- Don't dehydrate yourself and don't be afraid to drink water. Too little water makes your urine concentrated and this irritates the bladder.
- Don't drink excessively (even if you are on a diet). If you drink too much, you produce too much urine and this can overwhelm your urinary tract and bladder.
- The PERFECT amount of fluid per day is: 1500 mL (about 6 cups) to 2000 mL (about 8 cups)

4 Reduce emotional stress

- In today's world women may wear many hats and are multitaskers. You may be the caregiver to your children and aged parents, intimate confidant to your husband, climbing the corporate ladder and taking care of your household. Nerves can adversely affect your bladder by causing it to be too active.
- Identify your biggest stressor and try to eliminate or reduce it.
- Find ways to relax yourself. Simple meditation for 10 minutes a day can refresh you. Try yoga, get more sleep or do regular exercise.
- If all of these fail, you may need to get professional therapy.

5 Adopt healthy bowel habits

- If your rectum is constantly full of stool then it presses against your bladder and irritates it. It can also cause your bladder to hold less urine (meaning you have to go to the bathroom more often).
- Defecate on a routine basis. The best time to do so is in the morning and after breakfast.
- Relieve constipation by eating a diet high in fiber (at least 30-40 grams per day). You may also want to supplement your diet with fiber pills/ powder such as (Metamucil®, Citrucel®, etc.).

6 If you are overweight, try to lose weight

- Obesity is a risk factor for urinary incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse.
- Obese patients can also have worse results after surgery because of difficulty with the surgery or because of infection and bad healing.
- Try to change your eating habits and exercise regularly (at least 3-4 times per week).
- You may need to join a weight loss program to keep your motivation and to lose weight in a healthy way.

7 Practice "Kegel" exercises to strengthen your pelvic floor muscles

- Please ask your nurse or physician if you need more information on how to do "Kegels."

Conditions and disorders treated at the Center for Female Pelvic Medicine

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Urinary incontinence (leakage of urine) | Urogenital fistulas (abnormal communication between genital and urinary systems) | Urgency, frequency, nocturia (going to bathroom too many times during day and/or at night) |
| Pelvic organ prolapse (dropping down of pelvic organs such as bladder, rectum, bowel and uterus through the vagina) | Urinary tract injury resulting from previous treatment or surgery | Recurrent asymptomatic microscopic hematuria (small amounts of blood found on urine testing repeatedly, but urine does not appear bloody) |
| Fecal incontinence (leakage of stool) | Cosmetic pelvic surgery which is medically indicated (eg. Extremely enlarged labia (lips) causing pain, irritation and painful intercourse) | Dyspareunia (painful sexual intercourse) |
| Voiding dysfunction (inability to void or empty bladder) | Consultation regarding elective c-section (eg. Should I have a scheduled c-section instead of natural birth?) | Voiding dysfunction resulting from previous pelvic surgery |
| Sexual dysfunction (inability or difficulty with sexual intercourse because of anatomic pain- constricted or short vaginal canal) | Sexual dysfunction resulting from previous pelvic surgery | Pelvic pain resulting from pelvic floor muscle spasm or from painful bladder |
| Interstitial cystitis | Urethral diverticula (small urethral pouch causing urine dribbling after voiding) | Vulvar vestibulitis (vulvodynia) |
| Recurrent urinary tract infection (repeated bladder infections) | Defecatory dysfunction resulting from previous pelvic surgery | Vaginal obliteration (loss of vaginal canal resulting from complication of previous surgery or lack of vagina from birth) |

To make an appointment with one of our physicians at Loma Linda University Medical Center Center for Female Pelvic Medicine, call **1-888-97-WOMEN**.