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15 Tips To Keep Your Bladder Healthy

[Español](#)

People rarely talk about bladder health, but everyone is affected by it. Located in the lower abdomen, the bladder is a hollow organ, much like a balloon, that stores urine. Urine contains waste and extra fluid left over after the body takes what it needs from what we eat and drink. Each day, adults pass about a quart and a half of urine through the bladder and out of the body.



As people get older, the bladder changes. The elastic bladder tissue may toughen and become less stretchy. A less flexible bladder cannot hold as much urine as before and might make you go to the bathroom more often. The bladder wall and pelvic floor muscles may weaken, making it harder to empty the bladder fully and causing [urine to leak](#).

While you can't control everything that affects your bladder, here are 15 steps you can take to keep it as healthy as possible:

1. **Use the bathroom often and when needed.** Try to urinate at least once every 3 to 4 hours. Holding urine in your bladder for too long can weaken your bladder muscles and make a bladder infection more likely.
2. **Be in a relaxed position while urinating.** Relaxing the muscles around the bladder will make it easier to empty the bladder. For women, hovering over the toilet seat may make it hard to relax, so it is best to sit on the toilet seat.
3. **Take enough time to fully empty the bladder when urinating.** Rushing when you urinate may not allow you to fully empty the bladder. If urine stays in the bladder too long, it can make a bladder infection more likely.
4. **Wipe from front to back after using the toilet.** Women should wipe from front to back to keep gut bacteria from getting into the urethra. This step is most important after a bowel movement.
5. **Urinate after sex.** Sexual activity can move bacteria from the bowel or vaginal cavity to the urethral opening. Both women and men should urinate shortly after sex to lower the risk of infection.

6. **Do pelvic floor muscle exercises.** Pelvic floor exercises, also known as [Kegel exercises](#), help hold urine in the bladder. Daily exercises can strengthen these muscles, which can help keep urine from leaking when you sneeze, cough, lift, laugh, or have a sudden urge to urinate. These exercises also may help avoid infections by strengthening the muscles that help empty the bladder.
7. **Wear cotton underwear and loose-fitting clothes.** Wearing loose, cotton clothing will help keep the area around the urethra dry. Tight-fitting pants and nylon underwear can trap moisture and help bacteria grow.
8. **Exercise regularly.** [Physical activity](#) can help prevent bladder problems as well as constipation. It can also help maintain a healthy weight.
9. **Keep a healthy weight.** People who are overweight may be at higher risk for leaking urine. Making [healthy food choices](#) and being physically active can help [keep a healthy weight](#).
10. **Watch what you eat.** Some people with bladder problems find that some foods and drinks, such as sodas, artificial sweeteners, spicy foods, citrus fruits and juices, and tomato-based foods, make bladder problems worse. Changing your diet may help you feel better.
11. **Drink enough fluids, especially water.** More than half of the human body is made up of water, so it is important that you are drinking enough. How much water you need can vary based on your size, activity level, and where you live. In general, drink enough [fluids](#) so that you need to urinate every few hours. Some people need to drink less water because of certain conditions, such as kidney failure or [heart disease](#). Ask your health care provider how much fluid is healthy for you.
12. **Limit alcohol and caffeine.** For many people, drinking [alcohol](#) can make bladder problems worse. Caffeinated drinks (like coffee, tea, and most sodas) can bother the bladder and increase symptoms such as frequent or urgent need to urinate. Cutting down may help.
13. **Avoid constipation.** Too much stool built up in the colon, called constipation, can put pressure on the bladder and keep it from expanding the way it should. Eating plenty of [high-fiber foods](#) like whole grains, vegetables, and fruits), drinking enough water, and being physically active can help prevent this from happening.
14. **Quit smoking.** Bladder problems are more common among people who smoke. Smoking can also increase the risk for bladder cancer. If you smoke, [take steps to quit](#).
15. **Know your medications.** Some medications may make it more likely for your bladder to leak urine. Medications that calm your nerves so you can sleep or relax may dull the nerves in the bladder, and you may not feel the urge to go to the bathroom.



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Common bladder problems and when to seek help

Bladder problems can disrupt day-to-day life. When people have bladder problems, they may avoid social settings and have a harder time getting tasks done at home or at work. Common bladder problems include [urinary tract infections](#), [urinary incontinence](#), and [urinary retention](#).

Some signs of a bladder problem may include:

- Inability to hold urine or leaking urine
- Needing to urinate more frequently or urgently
- Cloudy urine
- Blood in the urine
- Pain or burning before, during, or after urinating
- Trouble starting or having a weak stream while urinating
- Trouble emptying the bladder

If you experience any of these symptoms, talk to your health care provider.

Treatment for bladder problems may include behavioral and lifestyle changes, exercises, medications, surgery, or a combination of these treatments and others.

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National Kidney and Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse

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National Association for Continence

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