**Patient information**

**Bladder exercise programme for women with frequent urination and strong urgency**

Before starting bladder exercises you should be examined by a doctor to rule out underlying causes of frequent urination - with or without strong urgency.

**What is normal?** We drink approximately 1-2 litres of fluid per day. Normally the bladder will contain 2-4 dl of urine before the need to urinate becomes troublesome. We normally empty the bladder 4-8 times per 24-hour period, depending on fluid intake. It's not unusual to have to get up once or twice a night if you lie awake for a while, or have drunk a lot during the evening.  **REMEMBER:** Coffee, tea and alcohol are diuretics (cause you to urinate more).

**Urinary leakage/incontinence and abnormal bladder function** If you are constantly waking several times a night due to the need to urinate, and pass small amounts of urine many times a day, it is a sign that the bladder is overactive, and that you need to "exercise" the bladder. Sometimes the bladder can be "spoilt" by always going to the toilet as soon as one feels the need. This can easily become a bad habit, because the bladder receives the signal to urinate for increasingly smaller volumes of urine. Eventually, the frequent need to urinate small quantities during the day will become a nuisance. In many such cases exercises can help. If you have a strong urgency to urinate followed by urine leakage, bladder exercises are useful in addition to other treatment. The purpose of these exercises is, therefore, to regain bladder control.

**The exercise programme itself**

1. Start by keeping track of your toilet visits by writing them down for one or two days before you start the exercises. Continue with this after starting to exercise, so that you can see if you improve.
2. When you feel a normal urgency, you must try to keep it back for about 15 minutes (if you have strong urgency you must concentrate on trying to suppress this urgency). If you manage to hold it in for 15 minutes, then increase to 30 minutes, and later to 45 minutes.
3. The bladder will gradually be trained to hold increasingly larger volumes.
4. The objective is to manage to hold it in for 3-5 hours, and that you avoid having to get up in the night.

**With diligent training you will already notice progress after 1-2 weeks. You should continue with the exercises for as long as you notice improvement. Good luck!**

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