

Lifestyle Changes

Adequate Fluid Intake

Individuals with urinary symptoms often limit fluids so that they will not have to urinate as often. Individuals with urge incontinence and have a high fluid intake (>2,400 ccs/day), may show a reduction in incontinent episodes and voiding frequency by lowering their fluid intake. Incontinent persons with low fluid intakes (<1,500 ccs/day) may benefit from increasing their fluid intake. Reducing fluid intake after 6 pm, and concentrating fluid intake during morning and afternoon hours may decrease nighttime incontinence episodes.

Stop Smoking

Nicotine is irritating to the detrusor muscle causing bladder contractions and urgency. A smoker's repeated and chronic coughing may cause urinary leakage. Smoking cessation may help to decrease urine leakage.

Dietary Modification

Individuals with urge UI may benefit from caffeine reduction. Significant rise in detrusor pressure has been demonstrated with caffeine administration. The effect of other foods and beverages on the bladder is not understood but elimination of one or all of the items listed below may improve bladder control. They are:

- Alcoholic Beverages, Beer, Wine
- Carbonated Beverages
- Milk/Milk Products
- Soft Drinks with Caffeine
- Tea & Coffee, even decaffeinated
- Citrus Juices & Fruits
- Highly Spiced Foods
- Sugar, Honey
- Corn Syrup
- Artificial Sweetener – Nutrasweet (Equal)

Maintaining Optimal Weight

Weight reduction is associated with improvements in urinary symptoms because of less pressure on the bladder.

Maintaining Bowel Regularity

Constipation and difficulty with defecation (straining during bowel movements) causes increased pressure on the bladder leading to UI. Individuals should keep regularity through increased fiber, exercise and fluid. A successful way to adequately increase fiber is by using a "special bran recipe". Mix together: 1 cup applesauce, 1 cup coarse unprocessed wheat bran and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup prune juice. Refrigerate mixture and take 2 tablespoons of the mixture every day. Take the mixture in the evening for a morning bowel movement. Increase the bran mixture by two tablespoons each week until bowel movements are regular. Always drink one large glass of water with the mixture.