

Advanced Urogynecologic Care

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BLADDER DRILL - Patient Instructions (Drill Cards)

1. The nurse or doctor will tell you how often you need to urinate.
2. Urinate as soon as you arise and mark the time on the face of the appropriate clock.
3. You are to urinate at the time interval as instructed by the nurse or doctor and mark each time on the face of the clock. You must attempt to empty your bladder even if you do not feel the urge to go. Only mark the clock when you actually empty your bladder.
4. You are to ignore all other impulses to void if they occur between the specified times. You should consciously do some other behavior to remove your thoughts from your bladder (ex. subtract 3 from 100). You should do a pelvic floor contraction (Kegel exercise). If you are standing, sit down. If you are sitting, lie down, if able to do so. The rule is that you are not allowed to urinate at any other time than the specified interval.
5. The last urination is at bedtime. The schedule does not continue through the night. If you get up to urinate during the night, mark the number of times you do so on the back of the card. If nighttime urination is a problem, you should restrict fluids after supper.
6. Use an asterisk (*) to note episodes of urinary incontinence (involuntary urine leakage) if applicable, on the bladder drill cards.
7. The routine continues until the first return visit. At this time, bring all bladder drill cards to your appointment for the doctor or nurse to review. They will then tell you what time intervals you should use for the next two to four weeks.

At the end of the next 4 weeks you will again return to the office to have the cards reviewed by the doctor or nurse.

If you have any questions or problems, please call the office and ask to speak to the doctor or nurse who has been advising you. Call 224-251-7387.

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Bladder Drills (Timed Voiding) No Cards

The goal of a bladder drill is for you to gradually:

- Increase the length of time between urinations.
- Increase the amount of fluid your bladder can hold.
- Diminish the sense of urgency and/or leakage you experience.

In other words, you will be retraining your bladder to empty when you want it to, instead of when it wants to. The guiding principle is to gradually increase the time between voiding episodes.

1. Begin your bladder retraining program by choosing a time interval (the time between one urinary void to the next) that you can manage successfully, even if that means voiding as often as every 30 or 60 minutes. It is important, for starters, to choose a time interval that you feel will not be too challenging.
2. Get up and go to the toilet when you wake. Then during your waking hours, you should attempt to urinate at the time interval you've chosen (for instance, every 60 minutes), whether or not you feel an urge at that moment. It is important that you try to void at that exact interval, whether you feel you need to go or not. This will train your bladder to void 'by the clock'.
3. **Try your best to ignore all other impulses to void if they occur between the specified times. In order to ignore those impulses, you should *mentally distract yourself* by removing your thoughts from your bladder (for instance, try counting backwards from 100, by 3's or 7's), and *physically suppress the urge* by performing your strongest pelvic floor contraction (Kegel exercise). Try contracting your pelvic muscles quickly and strongly two or three times, then wait for the urge to disappear. If you need help learning an effective Kegel exercise, please ask your doctor or nurse for instructions. Sometimes a positional change can also help, such as changing from the standing to sitting position.**
4. When you can manage a regimen like this for a week, increase the time interval by 15-30 minutes. Keep increasing the time interval, on a weekly or monthly basis, until you are voiding at intervals of approximately 3 to 3 ½ hours. You will be the best judge of how quickly you can advance to the next step. Don't try to advance too quickly; the process should occur 'slowly but surely over the course of several months.
5. The schedule does not continue through the night. If nighttime urination is a problem, you should restrict fluids after supper.
6. Keeping a diary of your bladder activity is sometimes helpful to monitor your progress. A diary shows you the value of the effort you're making.

Bladder drills tend to be an effective strategy in almost all patients with overactive bladder symptoms. Even if you are on another therapy such as medication, we encourage you to try this simple and risk-free technique.

If you have any questions or problems, please call the office, and ask to speak to the nurse or doctor who has been advising you. Office phone: 224-251-7387.