

Bladder Retraining or Timed Voiding

Bladder retraining or timed voiding is a technique to train the bladder into a more normal pattern of voiding. The normal interval between voiding during the day is every 3 – 4 hours.

Bladder retraining is a technique in which you urinate at timed intervals to teach or train your bladder into a new voiding pattern. To determine your voiding interval, review your daytime bladder diary. What is the longest period of time between voiding that is comfortable for you? This interval of time – 30 minutes, 60 minutes, 90 minutes or longer – is your voiding interval. For example, if you can comfortably wait 1 hour between voids, you would set up a voiding schedule of every hour. You will go to the bathroom when you wake up in the morning and once each hour until you go to bed.

If you have an urge to urinate before your voiding interval has passed, use urge suppression techniques to calm the urge and wait to go to the bathroom until the next voiding interval occurs. The exception to this would be if you were about to start an activity that would stop you from going to the bathroom at your scheduled time, for example, an appointment, a movie or a long drive. In these cases, go to the bathroom before the activity and reset your voiding schedule to this new time. Do not go to the bathroom again until your established voiding interval has passed.

If your voiding interval has passed and you do not feel the need to go to the bathroom, go anyway. During the training period it is important to be consistent with the voiding intervals.

Do not follow the schedule once you have gone to bed. As you improve, you can challenge yourself to go back to sleep. But use the bathroom if you feel that your sleep will be significantly disrupted.

Once you are successful and comfortable with your schedule for 3 days, increase the time between voiding by 30 minutes. When your new schedule is comfortable and you have been successful for 3 days, increase your time between voiding another 30 minutes. Continue this way, gradually increasing your time between voids, being comfortable with the new schedule for 3 days, adding another 30 minutes to the interval, until you are voiding every 3 – 4 hours during the day.