

## How to Retrain Your Bladder

### *What to eat and what to avoid*

*This handout gives tips on how to retrain your bladder.*

### Why should I retrain my bladder?

You may want to retrain your bladder if you need to urinate too often. Bladder retraining will slowly increase the size of your bladder and teach it to hold more urine. This will make it so that you do not have to urinate as often.

During this retraining, it is important not to irritate your bladder. To do this, you will need to:

- **Drink more water so that your urine is *dilute* (weak).** Dilute urine has a lower level of waste products. Strong urine can irritate your bladder. This can make you feel like you need to urinate, even if there is very little urine in your bladder.
- **Avoid foods and drinks that irritate your bladder.**

To track your progress during bladder retraining, we will ask you to keep a “bladder diary.”

### What do I need to do?

#### Change Your Diet

Stop eating foods and drinking beverages that irritate your bladder. These include:

- Coffee, tea, carbonated drinks, acidic juices, and alcohol
- Chocolate, tomatoes, and acidic fruits

To learn more about what foods to avoid, see the handout “Foods that Irritate Your Bladder.”



*We will ask you to keep a “bladder diary” to track your progress as you retrain your bladder.*

## **Drink More Water**

Start drinking at least 4 cups of water each day. Slowly add more, until you are drinking 8 cups each day.

At first, you will need to urinate more. Over time, your bladder will learn how to hold the extra fluid.

## **Wait 5 Minutes**

When you feel the urge to urinate, try to wait 5 minutes before you go to the bathroom. Each week during retraining, add 5 more minutes to your wait time before you go to the bathroom. This means you will wait 10 minutes during week 2, 15 minutes during week 3, and so on.

## **What to Expect**

The goal of bladder retraining is for you to be able to:

- Hold 10 to 13 ounces of urine in your bladder
- Urinate only every 2 to 4 hours during the day

You should see improvement within 2 to 3 months after you start retraining your bladder.

### **Questions?**

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

- Urology and Urogynecology Clinic: 206.598.4294, weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Women's Health Care Center: 206.598.5500, Tuesdays from 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. and other weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206.598.6190 and ask for the Urology doctor on call to be paged.