

# A few things you can do to help your bladder

1) Reduce or eliminate specific foods and beverages that irritate your bladder. AVOID the following foods / beverages:

Fluid	example / comment
Caffeinated beverages	coffee, sodas such as Coke & Pepsi are irritating and cause your kidneys to make lots of urine. Even decaf coffee has tannic acid which can irritate your bladder
Tea	including ice tea
Alcoholic beverages	Alcohol is both diuretic (causes you to make more urine) and irritating to your bladder
Cranberry juice	Can worsen urinary frequency because of its acidity
Milk	
Carbonated drinks	Even Sprite, Decaf Coke, etc.
Vinegar	
	Preservatives (citric acid, bezol alcohol)
	Artificial ingredients and food colors

Food	example / comment
Tomatoes	
Tomato products	
Spicy foods	Curry, MSG (Mexican, India, Thai, Chinese foods)
Sugar	
Honey	
Chocolates	This includes puddings & cakes
Corn syrup	
Aspartame / saccharine	Read food labels. Many foods contain artificial sweeteners (like NutraSweet)
Citrus fruit & juices	Orange, lemon, grapefruit, etc.
Excessive dairy products	Yogurt, sour cream
Aged cheeses	Especially soft brie-type or hard cheeses
Natural diuretics	Cantaloupe, watermelon, asparagus, cucumber causes your body to make more urine
Most Nuts	Almonds, cashews, pine nut are okay

- **Not all of the above foods / beverages are irritating to all bladders. Identify what irritates your bladder by eliminating all of them and then slowly reintroducing them one day at a time until you identify the irritant.**

- You CAN HAVE these beverages and foods:

Water	Frozen yogurt	Meats (avoid aged, canned, processed meat)
Decaffeinated tea & some herbal teas	Potatoes	Almonds, cashews, and pine nuts
Apple and pear juice	Some breads (avoid sourdough and rye)	Garlic
Non-citric juices	Poultry	Rice
Grape juice	Fish	Pasta
Blueberries and pears	American cheese, cottage cheese	White chocolate

2) Quit smoking

- Nicotine is not only colorless, addictive, and poisonous to your body, it can cause unnecessary bladder contractions
- Smokers also have higher risk of complications after surgery and may not heal as well.
- Chronic smokers have very bad lungs. Coughing exerts downward damaging pressure on the bladder and pelvic floor.
- Cigarette smokers have a higher risk for bladder cancer

3) Drink appropriate amounts of fluid

- Don't dehydrate yourself and don't be afraid to drink water. Too little water makes your urine concentrated and this irritates the bladder.
- Don't drink excessively (even if you are on a diet). If you drink too much, you produce too much urine and this can overwhelm your urinary tract and bladder.
- The PERFECT amount of fluid per day is: 1500 mL (about 6 cups) to 2000 mL (about 8 cups)

4) Reduce emotional stress

- In today's world, women may wear many hats and are multitaskers. You may be the caregiver to your children & aged parents, intimate confidant to your husband, climbing the corporate ladder, and taking care of your household. Nerves can adversely affect your bladder by causing it to be too active.
- Identify your biggest stressor and try to eliminate them.
- Find ways to relax yourself. Simple meditation for 10 minutes a day can refresh you. Try yoga, get more sleep, do regular exercise.
- If all of these fail, you may need to get professional therapy

5) Adopt healthy bowel habits

- If your rectum is constantly full of stool then it presses against your bladder and irritates it. It can also cause your bladder to hold less urine (meaning you have to go to the bathroom more often).
- Defecate on a routine basis. The best time to do #2 is in the morning and after breakfast.
- Relieve constipation by eating a diet high in fiber (at least 30-40 grams per day). You may also want to supplement your diet with fiber pills / powder such as (Metamucil, Citrucel, etc.)

6) If you're overweight, try to lose weight

- Obesity is a risk factor for urinary incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse
- Obese patients also can have worse results after surgery because of difficulty with the surgery or because of infection and bad healing.
- Try to change your eating habits and exercise regularly (at least 3-4 times per week)
- You may need to join a weight loss program to keep your motivation and to lose weight in a health way.