

- Imagine you are trying to stop wind escaping from your back passage.
- You will have to squeeze the muscles around the back passage. You should feel some movement in the muscles.
- Don't move your buttocks or legs.
- At the same time imagine you are passing urine and are trying to stop the flow of leaking urine. Squeeze the muscles around the opening from where you pass urine.
- Start by holding the muscles for as long as you can. Don't worry if this is only 2-3 seconds at the beginning, with practice you can aim to hold for 10 seconds.
- Try to repeat this hold until you get tired.
- The aim is to hold for 10 seconds and then relax the muscles for 4 seconds. Repeat 10 times.

These are called **slow exercises** or **slow pull-ups** and will help to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles.

- Now try to squeeze the same muscles quickly and hold for about 1-2 seconds, then let go quickly. Making sure you let go quickly each time, try to repeat this exercise up to 10 times.

These are called **fast exercise** or **fast pull-ups** and will help the staying power of the muscle. You should feel a quick lift in your muscles with fast exercise or fast pull-ups.

- Remember do not use your tummy, buttocks, or leg muscles when doing any of the exercises.

To check if you are doing the Pelvic Floor Exercises Correctly

A woman can put 2 of her fingers into her vagina. She should feel a gentle squeeze when doing the exercises.

A man can check with a mirror to see if the base of the penis draws in and scrotum slightly lifts up when he is doing the exercises.

Doing the pelvic floor exercises each day as part of your daily routine will help to keep the pelvic floor muscles strong and toned up and prevent the incontinence recurring.

- **Bladder Retraining.**

The aim of bladder retraining is to slowly stretch the bladder so that it can hold a larger volume of urine.

In time, the bladder muscle should become less overactive and you should become more in control of your bladder.

This means that more time can pass between feeling the urge to pass urine and having to get to a toilet.

- **Medication**

The doctor may prescribe medications. The OAB/urge incontinence may return after the medication is finished.

- **Surgery**

This treatment is only done if all other options have failed.

- **Botox (Botulinum Toxin A)**

This treatment involves injecting Botox into the sides of the bladder.



Remember, incontinence can be treated, managed and in many cases cured. You are not alone help is available don't suffer in silence

For further help and information contact

Your GP, Public Health Nurse, Continence Advisory Service.

www.hse.ie/continencecare

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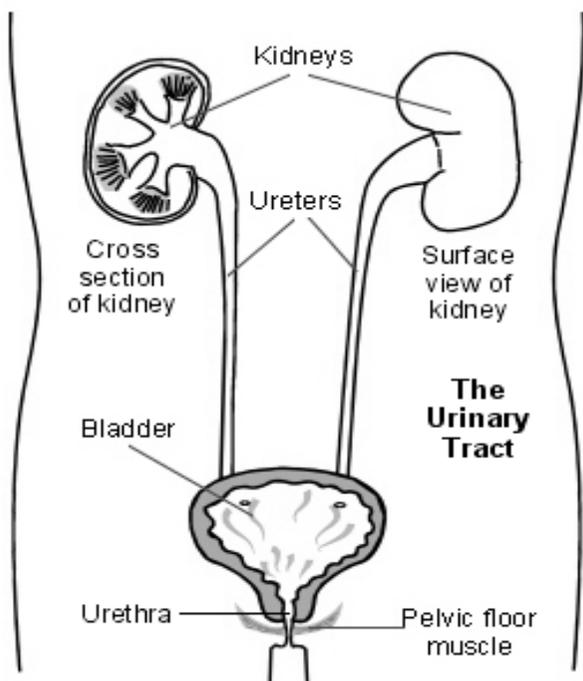
Adapted from patient.co.uk leaflet.

OVERACTIVE BLADDER /URGE INCONTINENCE

**This leaflet is best used
on the advice of
a Healthcare Professional.**

- Over Active Bladder(OAB) /Urge incontinence is when you get a sudden urgent desire to pass urine.
- You are not able to put off going to the toilet and sometimes urine leaks before you get to the toilet.
- If you have an overactive bladder/urge incontinence you pass urine frequently both day and night.
- Some women also find that they leak urine during sex, especially during orgasm.

Understanding the Urinary System



Understanding Overactive Bladder (OAB) /Urge Incontinence

- The kidneys make urine all the time. A trickle of urine is constantly passing down the ureters, the tubes from the kidneys to the bladder.
- The bladder is made of muscle and stores the urine. It expands like a balloon as it fills with urine.
- The outlet for urine which is called the urethra is normally kept closed. This is helped by the muscles beneath the bladder called the pelvic floor muscles
- When a about a mug full of urine is in the bladder, messages are sent between the brain and the bladder and you become aware that the bladder is getting full. The bladder should be able to hold up to roughly a pint.
- With OAB/urge incontinence, the bladder muscle sends incorrect messages to the brain that the bladder feels fuller than it actually is. This means that the bladder muscle squeezes too early before it is full, and so you get the sudden urge to pass urine frequently.

What Causes OAB / URGE INCONTINENCE?

- The cause is not fully understood. The bladder muscle squeezes too early and when you don't want it to.
- Symptoms may increase at times of stress.
- Symptoms may be made worse by drinking tea, coffee, fizzy drinks and alcohol.
- In some cases, symptoms of OAB/urge incontinence may develop following a stroke, Parkinson's disease, and Multiple Sclerosis.
- With a bladder or kidney infection or stones in your bladder.

What are the Treatments for OAB/URGE INCONTINENCE?

- **Drink 8 glasses of fluids per day.** Water is best
- **Avoid caffeine drinks like coffee,** tea fizzy drinks and alcohol. They can irritate the bladder.
- **Lose weight** if you are over weight.
- **Pelvic Floor Exercises.**

This involves strengthening the pelvic floor muscles, so that they can give the bladder vagina, womb and rectum in a woman and bladder, rectum in a man support.

This will improve your bladder control and improve or stop any leaking.

The aim is to do the exercises 10 times each 3 times per day.

There are **two types** of pelvic floor exercises one type of exercise helps the muscles work longer without getting tired and helps to **strengthen** the muscles,

The other type trains the **staying power** of the muscles.

It takes **time, effort and practice** to do the exercises correctly which helps to prevent leakage of urine before reaching the toilet or when coughing, laughing, sneezing and doing physical activity.

After several weeks the muscles will start to feel stronger and you will notice an improvement so don't give up!

Learning to Exercise the Pelvic Floor Muscles:

These exercises can be done lying, standing or sitting.

- If sitting, sit in a chair with your knees slightly apart.
- Breathe normally, do not hold your breath.