

Eliminating Bladder Irritants

Drink

Caffeine is the main ingredient that makes overactive bladder symptoms worse. It would be useful to cut out all caffeinated drinks to see if this improves your symptoms. This alone can cure the problem.

Alcohol, particularly wine and beer, is another major cause of overactive bladder so if you choose to drink alcohol it is expected that your symptoms will get worse.

If you get symptoms of urine infection (burning when passing urine, abdominal pain, frequency and urgency) you may choose to start taking cranberry juice/tablets or sachets, or drinking barley water as there is some research that says this may help.

You may wish to change from using cow's or goat's milk to using soya milk as it may be less of an irritant.

A lot of people think that by reducing the amount they drink, less urine will be made and therefore the symptoms will improve. However this concentrates the urine, which can lead to further problems as this may irritate the bladder.

The normal fluid intake should therefore be one and a half to two litres of fluid per day (six to eight glasses). If you decide to reduce your fluid intake to help your symptoms then make sure you drink at least one and a half litres of fluid per day to avoid dehydration. You also get water from the food you eat, fruit and vegetables have high water content so are a great source of fluid intake.

To prevent dehydration it is probably better to have small drinks often. Large drinks will make your body feel overloaded and your bladder will fill up quickly, giving you the feeling of urinary urgency. It may also help to avoid drinking large amounts after six o'clock at night to avoid passing urine overnight.

You can check your level of hydration by looking at the colour of your urine:

- Clear or with a very mild yellow tinge = Hydrated
- Yellow to strongly yellow in colour = Dehydrated
- Dark yellow to brown = Very dehydrated

You may also be asked to complete a bladder frequency chart to see how much urine you pass and how often.

Food

Many of the foods listed on the 'elimination' chart (on page 2) contain a substance called tyramine (indicated with a T). Tyramine can cause overactive bladder symptoms.

Try choosing plain fish and meat without spices – lamb is the best red meat.

Blueberries, melons and pears are better than the fruits listed on the 'elimination' chart and the addition of pumpkin seeds to your diet may actually help to reduce bladder irritation as they contain OMEGA-3, an essential fatty acid which acts as an anti-inflammatory.

Patients can identify trigger foods/drinks by an exclusion diet. By eliminating a certain food from the diet the body can detoxify and allow the bladder to recover from the particular irritant. It is best to try to exclude a chosen food or drink over a four week period, perhaps at a time when you are on holiday, so that you can see if cutting out that food/drink makes your symptoms better. **Only eliminate one food/drink at once so you can tell if this makes your symptoms better.**

Eliminating Bladder Irritants			
<u>Drinks eliminated</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Drinks eliminated</u>	<u>Date</u>
Tea / green tea		Coffee	
Cola drinks		Caffeine drinks	
Fizzy drinks		Alcohol (wine, beer)	
Cow's / goat's milk		Hot chocolate	
Fruit teas containing hibiscus		'Light' or diet type drinks (with artificial sweeteners including aspartame and saccharine)	
<u>Food eliminated</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Food eliminated</u>	<u>Date</u>
Citrus fruits		Spices/ Spicy foods	
Strawberries		Chocolate (T)	
Apricots		Muesli	
Grapes		Cheeses (T)	
Plums		Sour cream (T)	
Mangoes		Tomato based sauce	
Apples		Canned, cured, processed or smoked meat	
Tomatoes		Canned, cured, processed or smoked fish	
Bananas (T)		Nuts (T)	
Peaches		Yoghurts (T)	
Pineapple		Mayonnaise	
Raisins (T)		Onions	
Soy sauce (T)		Beans (T)	
		(T) = Tyramine	

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Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback, which helps us to improve our services. If you have any comments, compliments or complaints to make about your care, please contact the PALS team (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) on 01228 814008 between 10.30 and 4.30 Monday to Friday or email PALSCIC@ncuh.nhs.uk.

If you would like this factsheet in another language or format, for example Braille, large print or audio the PALS team will be able to assist you (contact details above)

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