

Self-Care Guide - Urine Symptoms in Men

This fact sheet helps you to know what's 'normal' and what you can do to help yourself if you are affected by urinary symptoms, such as passing urine very often, getting up at night more than once or twice to pass urine, a slow urinary stream, or having to rush to the toilet a lot of the time. It also tells you when you should become concerned and seek advice from a health professional.

Useful facts

How common are they?

Many men develop problems with storing or passing urine (urinary symptoms) as they get older. Up to half of adult men have some urinary symptoms up to the age of 40, while almost two-thirds of men between 40 and 60 and over three-quarters of men aged over 60 are affected.

What causes them?

Not all urinary symptoms are caused by the prostate gland, although it is often blamed. Many men with urinary symptoms worry about prostate cancer, but an enlarged prostate (called *benign prostatic hyperplasia*) is much more common – and the two are not linked. Diabetes can also cause urinary symptoms.

Will I need treatment?

Treatment for most urinary problems is aimed at improving symptoms. So, if you're not too concerned by your symptoms, you can often manage them very simply by making a few changes to your lifestyle.

What can I expect to happen?

Duration: Most urinary symptoms are long-term and will either stay the same or slowly worsen, unless they are caused by an infection.

What can I do to help myself– now and in the future?

Keep a drink diary for a few days:

Look at what you drink during a typical day. It can be useful to keep a diary for a few days, making a note of:

- o what you drink (for example tea, coffee, and water)
- o the amount you drink (use a measuring jug or estimate the volume – a typical mug holds approximately 250mls)
- o the time of day when you drink

Fluid intake:

Aim to drink between 1500 and 2000mls per day. Many people think that they need to drink large amounts of fluid each day for good health, but this is untrue and will often make urinary symptoms worse.

Avoid stimulants:

If you drink large amounts of tea, coffee, fizzy drinks or alcohol, try cutting these down as they can increase urinary symptoms. Even decaffeinated tea or coffee can cause problems, so try switching to mainly water, fruit juice, squash or herbal teas and see how this impacts on your symptoms.

Avoid drinks before bedtime:

If you wake during sleep to pass urine and you find this troubling, look at your fluid intake before you go to bed. Try to decrease the amount of fluid you drink in the hours before you go to sleep, and particularly avoid tea, coffee and alcohol. This can make a big difference.

Massage:

If you leak urine into your underwear after passing urine, this simple technique may help: press upwards on the area between the sack containing your testicles and your back passage after urinating and massage gently upwards and forwards – this can push out the last bit of urine and prevent leakage.

Bladder training:

If you pass urine too frequently or have to rush to go to the toilet, consider some simple bladder training techniques.

Exercise more:

Increasing your level of physical exercise and losing weight can reduce urinary symptoms and also improve other aspects of your health.

Over the counter (OTC) products:

Tamsulosin (or *Flomax™*) can help if an enlarged prostate is causing a slow urinary stream. Avoid herbal medicines until you've seen your doctor. Incontinence products help but are not the solution, as your problems may be treatable. Your pharmacist and doctor can advise.

When should I seek medical help?

Contact your GP surgery for advice if you:

- Develop new urinary symptoms, particularly if they worsen quickly.
- Have cloudy or smelly urine, or if passing urine stings (this may suggest infection).
- Find your urinary symptoms troubling and OTC medicines don't help.
- See blood in your urine – this can be a sign of bladder, kidney or prostate cancer.
- Leak urine (called incontinence).
- Have difficulty with erections – this is common in men with urinary symptoms.
- Worry about prostate cancer, particularly if this runs in your family.

Where can I find out more?

To learn more, go to **Patient.co.uk** at <http://www.patient.co.uk/health/lower-urinary-tract-symptoms-in-men>, Prostate Cancer UK at www.prostatecanceruk.org and **Your Prostate** at www.loveyourprostate.eu for further information. To discuss any problems with a specialist nurse, you can call a free helpline on 0800 074 8383.