

# Overactive Bladder

## Managing OAB at Work and on the Go

IT'S TIME TO TALK  
ABOUT OAB

If you have overactive bladder (OAB), it can be hard to get through the day without many visits to the bathroom. You may worry about having to be near a bathroom all the time, or about leaking urine. OAB can get in the way of work, going out with friends, exercise, and sleep.

OAB is the name for a group of bladder symptoms. There are three main symptoms:

- A feeling that you have to pass urine, urgently
- The need to pass urine often, day and night
- Urine leaks with the “gotta go” feeling

Fortunately, with advance planning and some adjustments to your routine, you can manage a busy work and social schedule outside of your home, without having to be near a bathroom all the time. Here are some tips to make your life easier at work and play if you have OAB.

## Lifestyle Changes

### Adjust Your Diet

Limit food and drinks that bother the bladder. Some foods and drinks that may affect your bladder:

- Coffee/Tea/Caffeine
- Alcohol
- Soda and other fizzy drinks
- Some citrus fruits
- Tomato-based foods
- Chocolate (not white chocolate)
- Some spicy foods

### Change Your Bathroom Routine

- Keep a bladder diary. This diary may show you things that make symptoms worse. For example, are your symptoms worse after eating or drinking

a certain kind of food? Are they worse when you don't drink enough liquids?

- Empty your bladder twice. This may be helpful if you have trouble fully emptying your bladder. After you pass urine, wait a few seconds and then try again.
- Practice waiting before you go to the bathroom, even when you have to go. At first, you wait just a few minutes. Gradually, you may be able to wait two to three hours at a time.
- Follow a daily schedule. Instead of going when you feel the urge, you go at set times during the day, whether you feel you have to or not.

### Do Kegels

Kegel exercises strengthen your pelvic floor muscles. They can help if you have OAB. Do them three times a day.

- Make sure your bladder is empty and then stand, sit or lie down.
- Tighten your pelvic floor muscles, hold tight and count to 8.
- Relax the muscles and count to 10.
- Repeat 10 to 15 times.

### Sleep Better

If you have OAB, you may need to get up to pass urine several times a night. To get a better night's sleep:

- Avoid drinking fluids at least two hours before bedtime.
- Wear protective pads if you're worried about OAB accidents during the night.
- If you take diuretics (also known as water pills), take them in the morning, if approved by your physician.
- If OAB is keeping you up at night, speak with your doctor about treatment.



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## Dealing with OAB at Work

By planning ahead, you can work in the office without making frequent bathroom trips that interrupt your day.

- Consider using an absorbent pad to protect your clothing.
- Schedule your bathroom visits to be sure you empty your bladder regularly. Go before you start work and before meetings.
- Keep an extra set of underwear or pants at work in case you need to change.
- Skip that mid-morning coffee. The caffeine in coffee can encourage your body to make more urine. Your best choice is water.
- Do Kegels at your desk.
- If you need more bathroom breaks, speak with your boss.

## OAB on the Go

Here are some ways to manage OAB while you're on the go:

- When you're out, take advantage of available bathrooms—even if you don't think you need to go.
- Go to the bathroom before exercise. Wear a pad if you're concerned about leakage.
- When you're dining out, cut back on alcohol—it can worsen OAB symptoms.

If you still have OAB symptoms after trying these ideas, talk to your doctor about treatment options.

## About the Urology Care Foundation

The Urology Care Foundation is the world's leading urologic foundation – and the official foundation of the American Urological Association. We provide information for those actively managing their urologic health and those

ready to make health changes. Our information is based on the American Urological Association resources and is reviewed by medical experts.

To learn more, visit the Urology Care Foundation's website, [UrologyHealth.org/UrologicConditions](http://UrologyHealth.org/UrologicConditions) or go to [UrologyHealth.org/FindAUrologist](http://UrologyHealth.org/FindAUrologist) to find a doctor near you.

## Disclaimer:

This information is not a tool for self-diagnosis or a substitute for professional medical advice. It is not to be used or relied on for that purpose. Please talk to your urologist or health care provider about your health concerns. Always consult a health care provider before you start or stop any treatments, including medications. For more downloads about OAB and other urologic conditions, visit [UrologyHealth.org/Download](http://UrologyHealth.org/Download) or call 800-828-7866.



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