



It is very common to notice changes in your bladder habits after you give birth & as you age. Some of these changes may include increased *frequency* and *urgency* of trips to the bathroom to pee, and leaking pee, especially with coughing or sneezing.

COMMON HABITS

Some habits can make the problem worse. These include:

1. Hovering over the toilet instead of sitting down. Instead, take a rest in the restroom. Sit & let everything release
2. Stopping and starting mid-stream to do your pelvic floor exercises (don't do kegels on the toilet)
3. Trying to force the flow of urine or pushing to pee.
4. Going to the bathroom 'just in case...' – especially at night.
5. Dehydration increases urgency & leaking because concentrated urine is a bladder irritant and causes your bladder to send you more signals & starts to contract

BETTER HABITS

1. Instead of hovering, take a rest in the restroom. Sit & let everything release. Take your time.
2. Let it flow. Rather than pushing, let your pelvic floor release to empty fully.
3. Wait 2-4 hours between going to the bathroom during the day. This encourages your bladder to send too many signals to your brain and not fill properly.
4. Hydration: Sip slowly throughout the day. Slow down or stop 2 hours before bed.
 - a. Dehydrated urine is a bladder irritant. Maintain good hydration to reduce leaking and urinary urgency.
 - b. Couple bladder irritants with a glass of water. Common irritants include caffeine, alcohol, fake sugars, and carbonation - yes even seltzer)
5. If you wake up at night, use the urge suppression techniques below.
6. Double Voiding: if you don't feel like you've emptied completely, stand up or shift your weight, then sit back down to let your bladder empty more.



There are two types of incontinence: stress & urge. Urinary urgency is when you feel a sudden urge to urinate and may or may not start leaking on the way to the bathroom or when you enter your home. Stress incontinence is leaking with downward pressure on your bladder like laughing, coughing, sneezing, exercising, or lifting. The downward pressure overwhelms the strength of your pelvic floor muscles.

URGENCY SYMPTOMS

- Do you leak when you feel the urge to urinate?
- Do you leak on your way to the bathroom or when you put the key in your front door?
- Do you leak when you hear running water?

TIPS FOR CONTROLLING URGENCY

- When you feel the initial urge, **stop**, sit down.
- if you can and take a deep, calming **breath**.
- Practice doing 5 to 10 **strong, quick contractions** with your pelvic floor muscles—this sends a message to your brain that it's not time to pee right now.
- **Distract** yourself by making a phone call or counting from 10 slowly down to 1.



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STRESS INCONTINENCE SYMPTOMS

- Do you leak when you laugh, cough, sneeze, jump, exercise, or lift?

TIPS FOR CONTROLLING STRESS INCONTINENCE

- **"Squeeze before you sneeze:"** contract your pelvic floor muscles - or perform a kegel - before and during the movement that causes leakage.
- Pelvic floor muscle **strengthening:** increase your pelvic floor muscle strength by performing kegels. Practice long holds and quick squeezes with a full relaxation between each squeeze.
- **Exhale on exertion.** Whenever you lift or exercise, breathe out on the hardest part of the motion to lift your diaphragm up and allow your pelvic floor to contract more strongly.
- Pad up and play on. While you work on strengthening your pelvic floor, use a pad meant for urine rather than menstruation.

**This does not constitute medical advice & is not a substitute for individual assessment or treatment.*