Shepherd Center
ANDREW C. CARLOS MS INSTITUTE

Tips for a Healthy Bladder

Three keys to a healthy and happy bladder:

1. Stay hydrated
2. Keep clean
3. Identify and treat symptoms early

The Balance of Fluids

The body uses water to perform all of its daily tasks and to get rid of waste products. When the body does not have enough water, it shows signs of dehydration. An easy way to check to see if you are hydrated is by looking at your urine. Normal urine is clear to light yellow with some white flakes. When you are dehydrated, your urine is dark yellow to brown in color and you may have other bladder symptoms.

The recommended amount of fluid to consume to stay hydrated is 64 oz, or 2 liters, per day. This number may be a little higher or lower for you. The amount of fluid you need to stay hydrated is dependent on your daily activities and the food you eat.

The first thing to do if you notice your urine is darker or if you develop any new or worsening bladder symptoms is to hydrate. The fluids will flush out the waste products and germs which are often the cause of your bladder symptoms. By intervening early, you can also prevent further complications.

What is normal urine?

- Clear to light yellow in color
- Some white flakes

What are signs of dehydration?

- Dark concentrated urine
- Flecks of blood in urine or catheter
- Sediment in urine or catheter
- Blocked urinary catheter
- New or an increase in bladder spasms
- Frequent urinary tract infections (UTI)
- Kidney or bladder stones
- Constipation
- Thirst

Is all fluid the same?

- No. Water is the best to drink to stay hydrated. Some types of fluids you may need to limit because they are dehydrating or cause bladder symptoms. High-sugar soda, tea and juice can irritate the bladder, leading to bladder symptoms. Caffeine and artificial sweetener can also irritate the bladder, causing bladder spasms, urgency, frequency and incontinence.

How much should I drink?

- The key is to drink enough to keep your urine light in color without any blood clots or sediment.

No Dirty Hands, No Dirty Supplies & No Dirty Environment

No matter how you empty your bladder, the goal is to stay clean to prevent infection.

How do I keep clean?

- Clean your hands before and after emptying your bladder.
- Schedule time to empty your bladder.
    - Do not allow the urine to sit in the bladder for a long time because germs can grow.
    - By sticking to a schedule, it is easier to identify signs of dehydration like dark colored urine or a small amount of urine out.
- Staying hydrated also keeps the bladder clean. The fluids you are drinking flush out the waste products, blood clots, and germs.
- Empty your bladder completely.
    - After urinating on the toilet, stand up and sit back down or reposition yourself to try to urinate more.
    - After the urine stops flowing through the IC, gently press on your bladder area to see if there is any more urine.
    - With an indwelling or condom catheter, keep the catheter and connected tubing free of kinks to allow the urine to flow into the collection bag.

- Use clean supplies.
  - Clean perineal area before and after emptying bladder.
  - Only use urinary catheters that are either new or have been properly cleaned before use.
  - Change out indwelling catheters as frequently as ordered by your doctor.
  - Remove soiled pads and garments as soon as possible to prevent infection and skin breakdown.
- Keep a packed bag in the car with a change of clothes, bladder program supplies, cleaning wipes and waste bag for emergencies.

Identify & Treat

Change in Urine		
Amount	Less urine out	Hydrate
	Slow stream	
	Blocked or clogged catheter	
Color	Dark yellow to brown	Hydrate
	Lots of sediment	
	Blood tinged or pink with or without blood clots	
Smell	Sweet or musty smelling urine	Hydrate
Symptoms	Urinary frequency	Hydrate
	Pain with urination	
	Bladder spasms	
	Incontinence or leaking urine around catheter	

When to Call the Doctor or Go to Urgent Care

- Fever greater than 101°F
- Loss of appetite
- Achy, feeling "sick"
- Unresolved pain or burning with urination
- Increase in spasticity
- Change in mental status