

Urination Facts & Information

What is urination?

Urination, the release of urine from the bladder through the urethra, is determined by how rapidly our kidneys can filter waste products and water to fill our bladder. When the bladder is filling, it expands like a balloon putting pressure on the bladder muscles - those muscles send a message to the rest of the body telling it that it's "time to go."

Quick Facts - Everybody has their own level of 'normal' but, in general, experts agree that:

- The average person urinates about every 3 to 4 hours, or a total of 6 to 8 times per day.
- 4 to 10 trips to the toilet daily is still considered normal.
- We tend to feel a strong need to urinate when we have between 350 to 600 millilitres of urine in our bladder.
- When you feel the urge to urinate, don't hold it in—this can lead to bladder muscle damage over time, or in severe cases, recurrent urinary tract infections or a decline in kidney function.

Top tips for healthy urination:

Hydrate - How much water you should drink daily depends on factors like age, activity level and weight. The goal should be to produce around 2 litres of urine per day (unless you have certain health conditions).

Limit caffeine and alcohol - these act as diuretics, causing the body to make more urine. Acidic foods and drinks, artificial sweeteners and sugars may also irritate the bladder lining for some individuals.

Don't go "just in case" - Avoid frequent trips to the bathroom "just to try", this trains the bladder to notify you with small volumes, leading to more frequent peeing over time.

If you're getting up to urinate too frequently during the night, reduce your fluid intake at least two hours before bed.

Fluid and food intake, exercise, medications, and certain health conditions can cause urine output to fluctuate.

What can affect urination?

Lifestyle

Many factors can influence the volume and frequency of urine production, such as time of day (our kidneys aren't as active while we sleep), body size, bladder size and urinary habits, exercise, and whether someone is well hydrated or not. Certain foods and medications can affect urine production also.

Chronic Kidney Disease

If you feel the need to urinate more often, especially at night, this could be a sign of kidney disease. If the kidney filters are damaged, it can cause an increase in the urge to urinate. However, lower amounts of urine or less frequent urination may also be a sign of kidney damage or disease. Talk with your GP if you have any concerns. A simple blood test and a urine test for protein will check to see if there is any kidney disease.

Overactive Bladder (OAB)

The term overactive bladder (OAB) covers a range of bladder symptoms that includes an increased need to urinate (frequency), a strong urge to urinate (urgency), and loss of urinary control (incontinence).

OAB is largely due to nerve signals in the brain being overactive in relaying messages to the bladder, causing the bladder muscles to be over stimulated. Talk with your GP in the first instance.

Prostate disease

If you have issues with your prostate, you may experience a need to urinate more often during the night (nocturia) as well as during the day. You may also experience urinary urgency – the urge to urinate can be so strong and sudden that you may not reach the toilet in time.

Diabetes

Some patients with diabetes may experience an increased need to urinate. Increased sugar levels in the blood may trigger the kidneys to produce more urine to help get rid of the sugar. Sugar in urine can also irritate the bladder lining and make people want to urinate more often.

Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)

When a person has a urinary tract infection, the bacteria can irritate the bladder lining. Symptoms of a UTI may include feeling a burning sensation when you urinate, bladder or pelvic pain, blood in your urine, smelly or cloudy urine, increased bladder irritability, including increased frequency of urination, and poor bladder control. Most people will experience symptoms when they have a bladder infection, but some people may only experience one symptom such as frequency or smelly urine. Sometimes people claim that they are unaware of symptoms even though bacteria are shown to be growing in their urine.

Pregnancy

Changing hormones, and increased pressure on the bladder from a growing baby, can lead to an increase in urinary frequency during pregnancy.

If you experience any of these symptoms, you should check in with your GP:

- Urinating more than every 2 hours, especially in small volumes (frequency)
- Urinating more than 10 times per day, or more than 3 times nightly
- Regularly going 6 or more hours without the sensation to pee, despite good hydration
- Sudden onset of an urge to urinate with minimal warning (urgency)
- Leakage of urine (urinary incontinence)
- A significant difference in how much or how often you're urinating
- Painful urination
- Blood in urine
- Difficulty starting to urinate or a poor urine flow
- An inability to complete bladder emptying
- Recurrent UTIs