

## GOOD TOILETING HABITS

Medical Research has documented that there are 20 million Americans with bladder problems of some sort. It is known that bladder problems affect people of all ages, races, and economic groups. Many health experts are hard at work to help people find the causes of their bladder problems and ways to help them with management strategies or cure. Developing good toileting habits can help prevent some bladder problems. These habits only require change in behavior and cost nothing except your own dedication and commitment.

### FLUID INTAKE

How much fluid intake is right? Many diets recommend that a large amount of fluid intake is healthy. They sometimes recommend up to eight to ten glasses of water a day plus other fluids such as sodas, coffee, tea, etc. *Remember that all liquids are fluids* - this includes ice cream, yogurt, jello, milkshakes, and soups. The “correct” amount of fluid intake is dependent on several factors, such as, temperature, body size, physical activity, salt intake, etc. Some bladders cannot tolerate increased fluid intake because they are no sooner emptied than they are full and need to be emptied again. The ultimate goal is pale yellow urine that does not have a foul odor.

### NORMAL VOIDING FREQUENCY

Normal frequency (how many times you urinate) during waking hours for adults is seven to eight times. During sleeping hours, waking once to urinate is normal for people under the age of 65. As a person ages, the bladder capacity, or how much it holds, becomes a little less. Seniors may suddenly find that they need to get up twice at night.

With normal fluid intake, we should empty our bladders every two to four hours while we're awake. Waiting extended periods of time to urinate can so stretch the bladder muscle that it may have trouble working properly. The urine left in the bladder, called “residual,” becomes stagnant and is attractive to bacteria that cause infection.

Another extreme is urinating very often to try to prevent urinary leakage. To understand what happens to the bladder in this case, imagine being on a diet and eating very small meals. After a while it only takes a small amount of food to make you feel full. If the bladder is emptied very often, such as every 30 minutes to an hour to try to prevent leakage, the result will be that your bladder will feel full with smaller amounts in it.