

Dietary Bladder Irritants:

Different beverages and foods can irritate the bladder which may lead to strong bladder urges, increased frequency to go to the bathroom, and urine leaks. New sensitivities can occur anytime. Many people notice improved bladder control after they do a **two week trial** of significantly reducing or eliminating the following:

- Caffeine in coffee, tea, cola drinks, energy drinks, chocolate and some over the counter cold and allergy medications. Reduce caffeine slowly to minimize headaches.
- Decaffeinated coffee and tea or herbal teas may still irritate due to oils present in all coffee and tea.
- Carbonated drinks such as sparkling water and pop.
- Alcohol.
- Acidic fruits and juices such as lemon, lime, oranges, grapefruit and pineapple. Even a slice of lemon in water may be too much. Consider less acidic fruits such as an apple, pear, banana or melons.
- Tomatoes. The seeds are the most acidic and can be removed. There are some varieties of tomatoes that are less acidic.
- Excess sugar or artificial sugars. Food and drinks that are labeled diet, low-fat, or low calorie rely on artificial sweeteners.
- Spicy foods.
- Vinegar (acetic acid) in pickled items, condiments, sour cream, and apple cider vinegar.
- Vitamin C supplements. Look for low acid forms of vitamin C.
- Processed foods or drinks can contain citric acid as a preservative and flavour enhancer.
- Red food dye (often found in candy, chips, popsicles, coloured drinks, and deli meats).

Other Bladder Irritants:

- Dehydration. Most people should drink about 6 to 8 cups of fluid a day. Some people need more if they sweat or exercise a lot. Aim for pale yellow urine as concentrated, medium-dark urine can irritate the bladder. At least half your intake should be plain water. If your urine is colourless, you are drinking too much and you should slowly cut back. Follow your doctor's recommendation if it differs from this.
- Constipation. If the bowels are full of stool, it can press on the bladder and cause incontinence. Adequate fluid and fibre can help. Slowly increase fibre to 25 to 35 grams a day unless otherwise advised.
- Maintaining a healthy weight can decrease pressure on the bladder and reduce incontinence.
- Smoking, vaping, or second hand smoke.