

Talking with your doctor about

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Before you go into your appointment, it can be helpful to do a little homework first. That preparation can save you and your doctor a lot of time in the diagnostic process, and you'll be less likely to overlook important details about your particular symptoms.

Track your symptoms – Keeping a diary for a week or two can provide important information about your leakage, including possible causes/triggers. Download your free bladder diary today at www.NAFC.org/diaries.

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INITIATING A CONVERSATION

If embarrassment is holding you back, remember that what feels embarrassing to you is an ordinary, everyday topic for your physician. After all, dealing with bodily functions is what they do for a living! Still, you don't have to go into all the details right off the bat. Here are a few suggestions to get the conversation flowing – start off with one of these and let your doctor take it from there:

- ***“I’ve been wondering about bladder issues...”***
- ***“I wanted to ask you about leaks...”***
- ***“Can we talk about leakage?”***
- ***“I’ve been meaning to ask you about some bladder problems...”***

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Answer a few questions – Take a moment to write down your answers to the questions below, and don't forget to bring this sheet with you to your next appointment:

1. About how many times a day do you urinate? _____
2. How many times a day do you experience the strong, sudden urge to urinate?

3. How often is that associated with leakage? _____
4. How often do you experience sudden leakage associated with physical activity (bending, lifting, coughing, sneezing, etc.)? _____
5. What type(s) of activity in particular? _____
6. Do you ever feel like you're unable to completely empty your bladder?

7. How often do you get this feeling? _____
8. Do you wake up at night to urinate? If so, how often? _____
9. Do you have any pain, burning or other discomfort when you urinate?
If so, explain. _____
10. Which of the following daily life interruptions, if any, do you experience because of bladder issues?
Check all that apply.
☐ Work ☐ Relationships ☐ Social commitments
☐ Travel ☐ Physical activity ☐ Intimacy
☐ Other (list) _____
11. Has the frequency or intensity of your symptoms changed over time? ☐ Yes ☐ No
12. On a scale of 1 – 5, with 5 being the most frustrated, how frustrated are you by your symptoms? _____
13. How are you currently treating your symptoms?



Have the confidence to speak up and a discussion plan with your dr.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

Once the dialogue has begun, it can be easy to forget to ask many of the questions you'd like answers to. Use the list below to make sure you cover all the important points, and don't be shy to ask for additional explanation if you don't fully understand the answers.



CAUSES

- What is causing my symptoms?
- Will things get worse if left untreated?
- What tests do I need to take?
- Could this be related to another illness or medical condition?
- Is this a temporary condition or something that may last a while? If so, how long does it usually last?

TREATMENTS

- What treatments are available?
- What do you recommend?
- Are there any side effects?
- What types of results can I expect with treatment?
- Are there alternate treatments that I should consider?

BEHAVIORS

- Are there things I can do on my own to improve my condition?
- Should I change my diet or drinking habits?
- Are there any foods you recommend I take or avoid?
- Are there exercises that can help?

MEDICATIONS

- Are medications available for my condition/ symptoms?
- What is their track record – have they been found to be particularly successful?
- How do I take it?
- What should I expect – how will it affect me?
- How long does it typically take to see results?
- What sort of side effects should I be aware of?

PROCEDURES

- Are there medical procedures for my condition?
- Are they invasive? If so, how much?
- Are they inpatient or outpatient?
- What is involved?
- What are the risks?
- What is the potential outcome?
- How long is the recovery period?
- What is follow-up like?

PRODUCTS

- Are there any particular products you recommend?
- What should I look for in a protective garment?
- Are there any brands I should look for?

AFFORDABILITY

- Does my insurance cover absorbent products?
- Medications?
- Procedures?



1-800-BLADDER www.NAFC.org

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