



# Improve your bladder health

Often people are afraid to admit to urologic conditions due to the stigma attached to the symptoms. These symptoms can go beyond incontinence to include behaviours such as frequency and urgency. However, behind the secrecy there are many people affected including men, women and children of all ages. The overarching problem is related to the filtering and carrying of urine out of the body. In females, they involve the urinary tract. In males, they affect the urinary tract or the reproductive organs. There are a number of things that can cause problems. Some of the most common causes include:

- ▶ Diabetes
- ▶ Pregnancy or childbirth
- ▶ Overactive bladder
- ▶ Enlarged prostate
- ▶ Weak bladder muscles
- ▶ Urinary tract infections
- ▶ Injury to the spinal cord
- ▶ Severe constipation
- ▶ Weak sphincter muscles (muscles supporting the urethra)
- ▶ Diseases including Parkinson's and multiple sclerosis



In some cases, lifestyle changes such as controlling fluid intake can be enough to address the problem. **If these approaches prove ineffective, you should contact your GP.**

## Here are **six simple tips** that could help you improve or maintain your bladder's health...

### 1. Drink plenty of water

Try to drink 6 to 8 glasses of water each day. Cut down on the amount of caffeine, fizzy drinks and alcohol you drink as these may upset your bladder.

### 2. Use good bathroom habits

It's normal to go to the bathroom 4 to 8 times a day and no more than twice a night. If you go more than twice a night, this may indicate an underlying health condition. Women should sit to go to the toilet, and they should not hover over the toilet seat. Take your time when on the toilet so that your bladder can empty. If you rush, and do not empty your bladder fully, you could increase your risk of a bladder infection.

### 3. Stay away from foods that bother the bladder

Some foods can irritate urinary incontinence. Make sure to limit your intake of foods like chocolate (also a source of caffeine), as well as spicy or acidic foods like tomatoes and citrus fruits.

### 4. Take care of your pelvic floor muscles

Keep your pelvic floor muscles strong with pelvic floor muscle training. Research different training to learn more about the possible benefits of kegel exercises.

### 5. Stop smoking

It's of great value to your bladder health when you stop smoking. Using tobacco is a major cause of bladder cancer. Cigarette smokers are two to three times more likely to be told they have bladder cancer, than non-smokers.

### 6. Speak freely about your bladder health!

Tell your GP about your symptoms. You may feel embarrassed; but keep in mind, your GP is used to hearing about all kinds of problems. Bladder issues are very common and there are a number of treatments available.



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## Check out this bladder-friendly recipe that is sure to please the crowd...

### Ingredients

- 1 Butternut Squash, peeled and cut into 3/4 inch chunks
- 4 Medium Shallots Quartered
- 2 Tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon fresh rosemary
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper

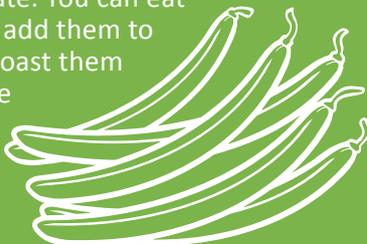
### Preparation

1. Mix all ingredients together.
2. Bake at 450 for 20 minutes.
3. Stir and bake 10-15 minutes more, then enjoy!

## Vegetable of the month...

### Green beans

At about 31 calories per serving, green beans will add some colour to your plate. You can eat them raw, add them to salads or roast them with a little olive oil.



## Summertime often means trips to the beach or local pool, outdoor concerts and BBQs.

While having fun outside, it's important that you stay hydrated. When you're dehydrated, your body doesn't have enough fluid and electrolytes to work properly. Electrolytes are minerals in your body like sodium, calcium and potassium. They're found in the foods you eat and the fluids you drink.

**The good news is that you have more options than just drinking plain water to stay hydrated this summer. Here are some tips to help you stay refreshed.**

1. Eat more **"water-rich" fruits and vegetables** like watermelon, strawberries, grapefruit, peaches and cantaloupe.
2. Try **iced coffee** (caffeine-free is always a great option). You may be surprised to know that coffee counts as part of your daily fluid intake. In fact, about 98 percent of your morning cup of coffee is water.
3. Try **iced tea**. There are many types of tea (white, black, green and oolong) and flavours to choose from. In general, tea has about half the amount of caffeine as coffee. There are also herbal and fruit teas that are caffeine-free.
4. Eat **cold soups**, preferably those that are broth-based. Gazpacho is one popular cold soup that originated from Spain. The main ingredients are tomatoes, bell peppers, cucumbers, garlic, and onions.
5. Choose **coconut water** over fruit juice. Coconut water generally has fewer calories and added sugars than fruit juice. It's also a good source of potassium.

## Quote of the month...

“ Don't wait for opportunity. Create it. ”

George Bernard-Shaw