

General guidelines for fluid intake and bladder health

1. What is considered a normal fluid intake??

- Fluid intake refers to *EVERYTHING* you drink – this includes tea/coffee, milk, juice, soup etc
- Try to have mainly water as this is the best fluid to drink
- The best way to monitor an adequate fluid intake is to OBSERVE YOUR URINE – it should be a PALE YELLOW colour throughout the day if you are hydrating properly
- It is normal for your urine to be a darker yellow first thing in the morning
- Natural supplements such as vitamins and minerals may make your urine a darker yellow – in this case, a *very general guideline* for fluid intake is to drink about 6-8 cups of fluid per day (note 1 cup = 220mls)
- HOWEVER: it's important to understand EVERYONE IS DIFFERENT and you may need MORE than this (especially if you are exercising, doing manual work and/or it is hot) or you may need LESS than this, especially if you have other medical issues – if you are unsure, discuss this with your GP or specialist.

2. Be careful how you consume your fluid intake:

- Spread it evenly throughout the day, this helps the bladder to fill at a normal rate if the fluid intake is spread evenly throughout the day, it takes about 1 ½ - 3 hours for the bladder to fill to a good and healthy volume

3. Consider the potential effects of different types of fluid on the bladder and nervous system:

- Caffeine which is found in:
 - coffee; normal tea; green tea; coca cola and other similar drinks; some antihistamines and other drugs
- Fizzy drinks including:
 - any soft drink; soda/tonic/fizzy mineral water and beer
- Alcohol

Other potential bladder irritants may include:

- Artificial sweeteners
- Low water intake may cause urine to be highly concentrated and irritate the bladder



4. What are normal bladder habits and volumes??

- Most people void (do a wee) about every 3-4 hours during the day (that is 4-6 times per day) and 0-1 times at night (the night voiding can be dependant upon your age and/or other health conditions)
- The bladder volumes at these times range from 250-500mls in most people. The bladder may not empty 100% when you void, sometimes there is a small amount of urine left in the bladder post-void, this is most often normal.
- The first urge to void is normally felt at about 150mls and becomes stronger as the bladder continues to fill
- The normal urge to void is most often felt in the bladder – above the pubic bone
- Bladder habits and volumes are important because:
 - frequently voiding ('just in case') does not allow the bladder to fill and stretch to its normal capacity. This stretching is important for keeping the bladder healthy and functioning normally
 - but, on the other hand, a lifetime of 'holding on' and letting the bladder fill to excess capacity (>500mls), over time, stretches the bladder too much and results in a 'floppy and weak bladder' and can result in difficulty emptying the bladder

REMEMBER: the information above is a guide - everyone is different – some medications and health conditions can affect fluid intake and output. If you are unsure, don't hesitate to discuss your individual situation with your GP or specialist.