

An insight into bladder irritation

Our women's health expert Jenny Deeming shares her knowledge and expertise about a topic on which some people are reluctant to seek help.

Before I begin my insight into bladder irritation, first we need to understand a little about how the bladder works.

It helps to think of the bladder as being like a balloon which stretches and expands as it fills. The bladder sends messages to the brain as it fills and when you are ready to go, the brain responds by sending a signal back to the bladder muscles instructing them to squeeze.

As the pressure increases in the bladder the valves open allowing the urine out, into the urethra and out of the body.

About bladder Irritation

The bladder can become irritated or sensitive resulting in:

- Increased frequency or urgency to wee
- Bladder spasms (which may lead to leaking)
- Lower abdominal pain

Can food and drink be linked to bladder irritation?

Yes! The bladder lining can be sensitive to certain food and drinks. The most common ones are:

- Fizzy drinks
- Tomatoes
- Sugar/ sweeteners
- Tea / coffee
- Alcohol
- Chocolate
- Vinegar
- Milk/dairy


What you can do if you suspect your bladder irritation is linked to food and drink

1. Keep a food diary – is there a link between certain food and / or drinks that cause your symptoms?
2. Remove the food / drinks which you suspect are a problem for a couple of weeks.
3. Re- introduce one item every two weeks.
4. Keep well hydrated.

Other causes of bladder irritation

There are other causes of bladder irritation included interstitial cystitis, infections and bladder cancer. Therefore, it is important to be checked by a healthcare professional in order to get the right diagnosis and set you on the right track.

Useful resources

 Bladder Health UK:
<https://bladderhealthuk.org/>

 POGP: <https://thepogp.co.uk/>

To make an appointment to see our women's health physiotherapist, call 01428 647647 or email therapy@holycross.org.uk.





Take part in our 'Know Your Bladder' quiz

- 1) How many times do you go for a wee in the day?
- 2) Do you get up to go for a wee at night?
- 3) How much should you drink in the day?
- 4) What is the bladder's capacity?
- 5) Is it normal to leak wee after giving birth?

Answers

- 1) On average it is normal to go the toilet 5-8 times during the day
- 2) Your bladder has the capacity to hold urine through the night without having to get up to go to the toilet. This can change with age and often those over 65 may need to get up once or twice in the night.
- 3) Aim to drink between one and a half to two litres of fluids a day (that's 6-8 large mugs).
- 4) The bladder can hold on average up to 400-500mls before there's an urge to urinate.
- 5) No! You may experience some leaking for a few weeks post birth. Pelvic floor exercises are key to regaining control.

Pregnancy and Stress Incontinence

More than a third of women experience involuntary leaking during the second and third stages of pregnancy. Not surprising really – with all that extra weight on your pelvic floor, hormonal changes resulting in lax ligaments and your baby pushing into your bladder.

Don't worry – this is normal. Keep going with your pelvic floor exercises even if you are leaking as this will help keep some strength and make the road to recovery easier after your baby is born.

For advice on correct technique and how to activate your pelvic floor in different positions see a women's health physiotherapist who can guide and advise.

Contact us to book a Mummy MOT, an initial assessment with Jenny or to take part in the Pilates class.

You can also follow us on Instagram @the_physiotherapy_centre or Facebook @holycrossphysio/

Menopause News

From this month, vaginal oestrogen will be made available to buy over the counter for the first time in the UK.

This landmark change has been backed by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and will enable women who have gone through the menopause to purchase the Gina tablets at pharmacies.

Vaginal atrophy is a common side effect of the menopause which can leave the vagina feeling itchy, dry and sore during intercourse. This is caused by a drop in oestrogen levels during and after menopause. The Gina tablets provide a low dose of HRT and come in pre-loaded applicators that are inserted directly into the vagina providing direct relief of symptoms.

The tablets are now available in 600 Boots stores and online, and will be rolled out to other pharmacies in the coming weeks.

Jenny's latest training

Jenny has recently attended a bowel study day focusing on post natal women who have undergone 3rd and 4th degree tears during labour.

A large tear during labour can affect the bowel and how it functions, which can be distressing and have psychological impacts on future pregnancies.

Having a detailed assessment and plan with a women's health physiotherapist can help you achieve your optimal recovery.



About Jenny

Jenny Deeming is a qualified physio and specialises in women's health.

She is an accredited Mummy MOT practitioner and runs a Pilates class aimed at post-natal women. Jenny holds women's health clinics for the diagnosis and treatment of a range of post-natal conditions.