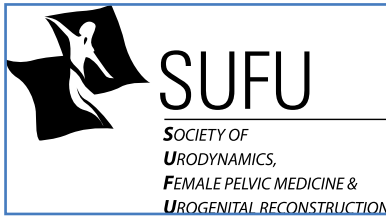


# CHANGES YOU CAN MAKE TO IMPROVE BLADDER PROBLEMS



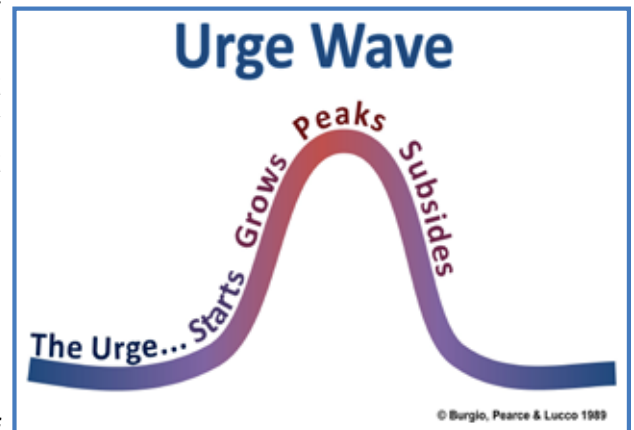
The SUFU Foundation OAB Clinical Care Path Way  
For more information on better bladder control visit:  
<http://sufuorg.com/oab>

## CONTROLLING YOUR BLADDER URGES

**People with overactive bladder (OAB) may experience “urgency.” Signs of urgency are:**

- Needing to urinate frequently
- Waking up in the night to go to the bathroom
- Bladder leaks

The “urge” to urinate is normal and happens when your bladder is getting full. “Urgency” is a sudden, strong need to urinate that is difficult, or sometimes even impossible, to put off. Bladder urges come in waves. First they **start**. Then they grow **stronger** until they **peak**. Eventually, they **subside**. Most people with OAB respond to these urges by running to the bathroom. However, doing this can actually make things worse. It increases pressure in your bladder and causes urgency. In the end, rushing makes it more likely that you’ll lose control and have a bladder leak.



There are a number of ways to try to reduce the sense of urgency. They can help you take control of your bladder, increase the amount of urine your bladder can hold, and reduce bladder leaks. The following tips are meant to help you cut down on your number of bathroom visits, and give you more control over your bladder and your life.

**When the urge strikes, don’t rush to the bathroom. Instead:**

- Stop and stay still. Sit down if you can.
- Squeeze your pelvic floor muscles quickly (3–5 times).  
Keep trying until the urgency gets smaller or you have it under control.
- Relax the rest of your body. Take a deep breath.
- Concentrate on stopping the urge.
- Wait until the urge goes away.
- Then walk to the bathroom at a normal pace.

**Other Ways to Reduce Your Bladder Urgency:**

- Try relaxation techniques
  - Sit comfortably. Close your eyes.
  - Relax your muscles. Begin with your feet and work your way up your body.
  - Take slow, deep breaths in and out. Concentrate on the movement of your chest.

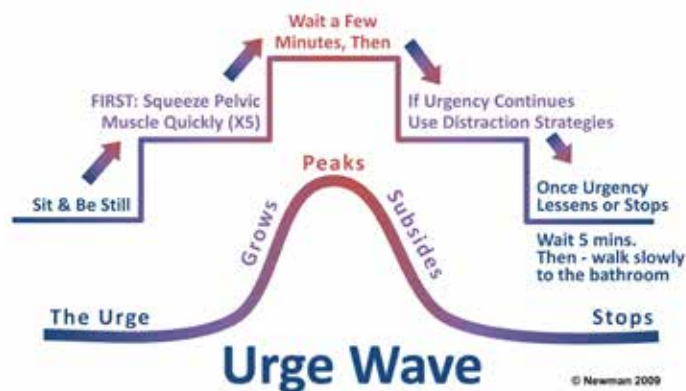
## CONTROLLING YOUR BLADDER URGES

- Try to get your mind off of your bladder by focusing on something else, such as:
  - A nonphysical task. Try reading, handwork, balancing your checkbook, a puzzle, playing a game on an iPad or computer, or making a “to-do” or grocery list.
  - A mind task. Challenge yourself to count backwards from 100 by 7s.
- Self-affirmations. Repeat a phrase that reminds you that you are in control:
  - “I can wait.”
  - “I am in control, not my bladder.”

### Delayed Voiding

Once you feel confident that you can control your bladder urges, it's time to take the next step to strengthen your bladder control. To do this, follow these simple steps:

1. Instead of walking to the bathroom right after you control the urge, try waiting for 5 minutes before going instead.
2. Once you are comfortable with waiting 5 minutes, try waiting for 10 minutes.
3. If you find that you are urinating more than 8 times during the day, continue increasing the amount of time you wait. Eventually you will get on a more manageable bathroom schedule (every 3-4 hours during the day).



### Urge Control During the Night

These urge-control tips work at night too. When you wake up with a bladder urge, try using the tips that work best for you for 2 minutes. If they work, great! You can go back to sleep. If the urge does not go away after 2 minutes, go ahead to the bathroom and then return to sleep.

### How long does it take for the urge-control approaches to work?

Changes to your bladder control will be gradual. It will take time, practice, and patience to build your skills. Most people notice some positive changes within 2 weeks, but it may take 3 months or more to see the full effects of your efforts.