

# **Bladder Retraining Program**

## **Mr Daniel Steiner – Urologist**

The technique involves increasing the amount of fluid the bladder can hold by gradually 'stretching' it. Instead of going to the toilet as soon as you get the desire to void, you should wait 5 minutes every time. At first this may be difficult and you may only be able to achieve 2-3 minutes, but persist!

Slowly increase the period of deferment from 5 to 10 minutes, and then from 10 to 20 to 30 minutes. Keep a bladder diary of how your bladder is working every day. During the time you are putting off going to the toilet you are learning how to suppress bladder contractions. By filling the bladder with more urine its wall is being stretched and so will hold more. Set yourself a higher target bladder capacity to aim for each week or so.

It is also vital to stop going to the toilet 'just in case'. This encourages your bladder to hold only small volumes. You should only empty the bladder when it is full and you have done your 'hold-on' exercise.

### **Techniques:**

One or more of these techniques may be helpful in controlling the bladder when the urge is there and allow voiding to be delayed. They all require practice and can also be used together.

**PELVIC FLOOR CONTRACTION:** This helps prevent urine leakage when there is an urgent desire to void and suppress the unwanted bladder contraction by a spinal cord reflex. Works best if applied early on in an unstable contraction.

**PERINEAL PRESSURE:** Pressure on the perineum (area between the vagina/scrotum and rectum) by reflex suppresses unwanted bladder contractions, e.g. sitting on the arm of a chair or the edge of a firm chair.

**MENTAL DISTRACTION:** When the bladder contracts at inappropriate times try to distract your mind by concentrating on something other than the toilet and emptying your bladder - anything will do, e.g. mental arithmetic, the shopping list. Breathing exercises or other relaxation techniques can also be good distractions.