

## Fluid Advice

Fluids are vital for both our general health and bladder health. By thinking carefully about the type, quantity and timing of the drinks you have, you may help yourself avoid many bladder problems.

- ✓ It is recommended we drink 1½ litres of fluid daily. This is about 6-8 mugs or 8-10 cups and will keep the urine dilute. Concentrated urine can irritate our bladders, giving feelings of wanting to pass urine often and urgently. Drinking plenty will also help to avoid urine infections and the formation of stones.
- ✓ Drinking plenty of water, tap or bottled, is considered healthy.
- ✓ Many of our most popular drinks – tea (black & green), coffee, cola – contain caffeine. Caffeine may excite your bladder muscle, increasing your urge to go to the toilet and making you go more often. By reducing the number of drinks containing caffeine you have some symptoms may disappear.

Remember to always replace caffeinated drinks, to keep up your total daily intake. Try drinking decaffeinated varieties as an alternative, choosing a product decaffeinated with water or carbon dioxide not chemicals (look on the label for this). However, reduce your caffeine intake gradually as caffeine-withdrawal can cause headaches, tiredness and anxiety.

- ✓ Fizzy drinks may also irritate your bladder, so try reducing your intake of these.
- ✓ Space your drinks out over the day. If getting up to go to the toilet at night is a problem, try not having your last drink just before going to bed and having a caffeine free one.
- ✓ If you reduce your fluid intake to go out, remember to drink more later to make up.
- ✓ Fruit juices are a popular alternative. However, if you are taking any hay fever or heart and blood pressure drugs avoid taking Grapefruit juice at the same time, as it can react with some of these.
- ✓ Cranberry juice has been shown to protect against urinary infections, in particular those caused by E coli. The tannins in the juice prevent the bacteria clinging to the bladder surface. If you suffer from cystitis due to a bacterial infection try a glass in the morning and evening but remember you need to take it regularly to gain any benefit.

However, Cranberry juice may make Interstitial Cystitis (cystitis not caused by a bacterial infection) worse. Furthermore, if you are taking Warfarin it is advisable to limit or avoid drinking cranberry juice, as there is some evidence it may interact with this drug's action. Reduced sugar cranberry juice is available for diabetics and those on calorie controlled diets. As Cranberry Juice is acidic, those suffering from Rheumatoid Arthritis and Upper Gastric Irritation may find acidic juices such as Cranberry, adversely affect the condition.

- ✓ Herbal teas are often seen as a healthy alternative to tea and coffee. However, each Herb and the amount drunk will have a different effect on your body. It is advisable not to drink more than three cups daily of any type.
- ✓ Camomile tea relaxes muscle spasms so can ease symptoms of cystitis or a painful bladder. This is not recommended if you suffer from asthma or eczema, are on anticoagulant therapy, or are pregnant or breast-feeding.
- ✓ All types of alcohol will make you pass more urine and may excite the bladder muscle.