

# Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA)



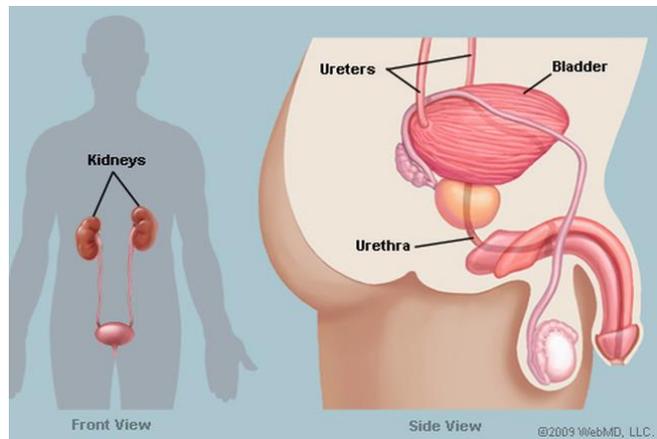
## Fact Sheet on Causes of Bathroom Frequency in Men

### Introduction

The urinary bladder is an expandable muscular sac situated in the pelvis, just above and behind the pubic bone. When empty, the bladder is about the size and shape of a pear.

[Picture Credit: Male Urinary System]

Urine is made in the kidneys. From there it travels down via two tubes called ureters to the urinary bladder, usually referred to just as the bladder. The bladder's main function is to store urine, and also allowing urination to be infrequent and voluntary.



The bladder is lined by layers of muscle tissue that can stretch to accommodate increases in volume of urine. The normal capacity of the bladder varies between 400 to 700 millilitre (mL).

When empty, the bladder's muscle wall becomes thicker and the entire bladder becomes firm. As the ureters - two tubes that allow urine to flow from the kidneys to the bladder - fill the bladder, the muscle wall of the bladder thins and the bladder moves upward from the pelvic cavity, toward the lower part of the abdominal cavity.

This stretching can increase the size of the bladder from about 5cm to more than 15cm long, depending on the amount of urine that is inside the bladder. The typical male bladder reaches its capacity between 400 to 700 mL of urine, but the urge to urinate comes when the bladder is about one-quarter to one-half full.

An internal sphincter where the urethra leaves the bladder - a type of muscular valve - helps prevent urine from leaking out. The triangle-shaped base of the bladder, known as the trigone, helps prevent stretching of the urethra or backflow of urine into the ureters.

When it receives an appropriate nerve signal, the bladder releases urine through the urethra, the tube that carries urine out of the body. In men, this tube ends at the tip of the penis.

A healthy bladder holds urine until the man finds time to relieve himself, although problems can arise for varying reasons.

During urination, the bladder muscles contract, and two sphincters (valves) relax and open to allow urine to flow out of the bladder. Urine exits the bladder into the urethra, which carries urine out of the body. Because it passes through the penis, the urethra is longer in men ( $\pm 20$  centimetres) than in women ( $\pm 3$  to 4 centimetres). (Healthline; WebMD).

## **Urinary Problems in Men**

Urinary problems in men include the following:

Urinary incontinence - including stress incontinence (involuntary loss of urine during actions such as coughing, sneezing, and lifting), urge incontinence (involuntary loss of urine following an overwhelming urge to urinate that cannot be halted), and overflow incontinence (constant dribbling of urine usually associated with urinating frequently and in small amounts) - some men may have one, two, or all three types of incontinence.

Weak or damaged bladder muscles - men who have had diabetes for many years may develop nerve damage that may affect bladder control. Stroke, Parkinson's disease, and multiple sclerosis all affect the brain and nervous system, so they can also cause bladder emptying problems.

An overactive bladder - is a condition in which the bladder squeezes at the wrong time. The condition may be caused by nerve problems, or it may occur without any clear cause. A person with an overactive bladder may have any two or all three of the following symptoms:

- *urinary frequency* - urination eight or more times a day or two or more times at night
- *urinary urgency* - a sudden, strong need to urinate immediately
- *urge incontinence* - urine leakage that follows a sudden, strong urge to urinate

Prostate cancer – cancer of the prostate is often the cause of urinary problems in men. Prostate cancer is uncommon in men under the age of 40.

Other prostate conditions – benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH) – the prostate gland commonly becomes enlarged as a man ages. As the prostate enlarges, it may squeeze the urethra and affect the flow of the urinary stream. Lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS), associated with the development of BPH, rarely occur before age 40, but more than half of men in their sixties and up to 90 percent of men in their seventies and eighties have some LUTS. The symptoms vary, but the most common ones involve changes or problems with urination, such as a hesitant, interrupted, weak stream, urgency and leaking or dribbling, more frequent urination, especially at night, and urge incontinence. Problems with urination do not necessarily signal blockage caused by an enlarged prostate.

Radical prostatectomy - the surgical removal of the entire prostate gland - called radical prostatectomy - is one treatment for prostate cancer. In some cases, the surgery may lead to erection problems and urinary problems.

External beam radiation - this procedure is another treatment method for prostate cancer. The treatment may result in either temporary or permanent bladder problems.

Nerve damage – spinal cord injury may affect bladder emptying by interrupting the nerve signals required for bladder control.

Getting older - men often notice a slight change in their urinary habits around the age of 50. This can be quite normal and may simply be a sign of getting a little older. On average one should pass urine about four to eight times in 24 hours depending on how much one drinks. It is important, though, that one should be aware when one's bladder is full, and still have enough time to reach a toilet. Every time one passes urine one's bladder should empty completely and one should not experience leaking. At night, most men will be able to sleep for six to eight hours without having to pass urine. As one gets older one's body produces more urine overnight and middle aged and older men often find they have to get up once (or maybe twice) in the night.

Decreased circadian production of antidiuretic hormone - as men age, their bodies make less antidiuretic hormone at night (a hormone that helps one's body hold on to fluids) and, therefore, the bladder cannot always hold the increased production of urine at night. Drinking too close to bedtime can be part of the problem, too. One should, therefore, try to cut back on drinks about 2 hours before going to sleep, and also watch alcohol and caffeine consumption (Bodo, *et al.*, 1998; Moon, *et al.*, 2004).

Consumption of certain foods and drinks - foods containing a lot of acid, like tomatoes, strawberries, and citrus fruits, can inflame one's bladder, causing one to urinate more often or experience pain or pressure. Alcohol, caffeine, chocolate, spices, carbonated drinks, pickled foods, and artificial sweeteners also can make things worse. (WebMD; Healthline; MedicineNet; Prostate Cancer Research Foundation, Rotterdam).

### **Symptoms to Look Out For**

Changes in one's urinary habits may be a sign that one has a problem. This might be a prostate or other health condition such as diabetes. If one notices a change, one should consult a doctor, preferably an urologist.

Symptoms to look out for include:

- Urinating more frequently - especially at night
- Difficulty starting to urinate
- Difficulty in stopping the flow of urine
- Straining or taking a long time to urinate
- Weak flow of urine
- Feeling that one's bladder has not completely emptied
- Urgency – occasionally leaking urine before reaching the toilet
- Dribbling urine
- Pain when passing urine
- Pain when ejaculating
- Problems getting or keeping an erection

- Blood in urine or semen

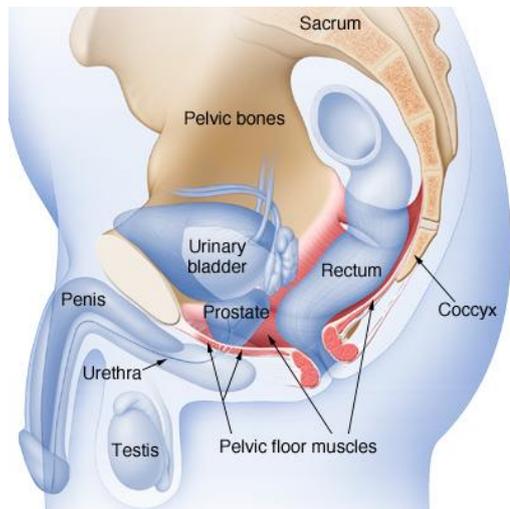
Be aware that having one or more of the above symptoms does not necessarily indicate one has prostate cancer. However, for confirmation, a visit to an urologist is essential. (Prostate Cancer Research Foundation, Rotterdam).

### How to Do Kegel Exercises

Kegel exercises are exercises that help one zero in on, and strengthen, muscles below the bladder that help control urination. In men, urinary incontinence can be caused by a weak urinary sphincter that may result from surgery for prostate cancer, an overactive bladder, or a bladder that does not contract.

[Picture Credit: Pelvic Floor Muscles]

Kegel exercises will not help one look better, but they do something just as important - strengthen the muscles that support the bladder. Strong pelvic floor muscles can go a long way toward warding off incontinence.



These exercises were developed in the late 1940s by Dr Arnold H Kegel, an American gynaecologist, as a nonsurgical way to prevent women from leaking urine. They also work for men plagued by incontinence.

Although the exercises themselves are simple, finding the right muscles to exercise is not always that easy. One-third or more of men who do Kegels are actually working their abdominal, buttock, or inner thigh muscles. They do not reap the benefits of the exercises.

The first step is to find the right muscles. Imagine trying to stop passing gas. Squeeze the muscles that would be used to do that. If experiencing a sense a "pulling" feeling, those are the right muscles for pelvic exercises.

Do not squeeze other muscles at the same time. Neither should one hold one's breath. Also, be careful not to tighten the stomach, leg, or buttock muscles. Squeezing the wrong muscles can put more pressure on the bladder control muscles. Squeeze just the pelvic muscles.

Pull in the pelvic muscles and hold for a count of 3. Then relax for a count of 3. Repeat, but do not overdo it. Work up to 3 sets of 10 repeats.

Then start doing pelvic muscle exercises lying down. This position is the easiest for doing Kegel exercises because the muscles then do not need to work against gravity. When the muscles get stronger, one should do the exercises sitting or standing. Working against gravity is like adding more weight.

Be patient. Do not give up. It takes just 5 minutes, three times a day. Bladder control may not improve for 3 to 6 weeks, although most people notice an improvement after a few weeks.

(Harvard Medical School; MedicineNet).

## The Bladder Diary

Bladder Diaries are important to help one understand the functioning of one's bladder. It describes one's day-to-day bladder habits and patterns related to urination. It typically documents the time and amount of fluid intake (great way to look for bladder irritants), the time of each void, each accidental leaking and a notation of the volume of urine loss, in subjective terms of large (greater than ¼ cup), medium (less than ¼ cup) or small (dribbles). It is an accurate measure of the urinary frequency, volume, and circumstance surrounding urinary accidents.

### Your Daily Bladder Diary

This diary will help you and your health care team figure out the causes of your bladder control trouble. The "sample" line shows you how to use the diary.

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

| Time       | Drinks     |           | Trips to the Bathroom |  |  | Accidental Leaks |                                     |         | Did you feel a strong urge to go?<br>Circle one | What were you doing at the time?<br><i>Sneezing, exercising, having sex, lifting, etc.</i> |
|------------|------------|-----------|-----------------------|--|--|------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|---|--|
|            | What kind? | How much? | How many times?       | How much urine?<br>(circle one)  | How much?<br>(circle one)  | sm               | med                                 | lg      |   |  |
| Sample     | Coffee     | 2 cups    | ✓                     | <input checked="" type="radio"/> sm <input type="radio"/> med <input type="radio"/> lg | <input type="radio"/> sm <input checked="" type="radio"/> med <input type="radio"/> lg | Yes              | <input checked="" type="radio"/> No | Running |   |  |
| 6-7 a.m.   |            |           |                       | <input type="radio"/> sm <input type="radio"/> med <input type="radio"/> lg            | <input type="radio"/> sm <input type="radio"/> med <input type="radio"/> lg            | Yes              | No                                  |         |   |  |
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| 11-12 noon |            |           |                       | <input type="radio"/> sm <input type="radio"/> med <input type="radio"/> lg            | <input type="radio"/> sm <input type="radio"/> med <input type="radio"/> lg            | Yes              | No                                  |         |   |  |
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Use this sheet as a master for making copies that you can use as a bladder diary for as many days as you need.

## **One should take this chart with when talking to a health care provider about one's bladder problems**

It may be quite time consuming and difficult to find the time to complete, particularly if one is very active during the day. But one should keep record for 3 and 5 days in order to get the most accurate picture of one's voiding patterns. It is best to record on at least three consecutive days, with one being a weekend.

The bladder diary is also a method for one to focus on one's behaviour related to overactive bladder and incontinence. Sometimes the mere fact of keeping the diary is therapeutic in and of itself and the incontinence improves once a causal relationship with what one eats and drinks and do has been discovered.

(Bladder Diary).

### **Possible Medical Treatment**

A doctor may choose from the following types of drugs to treat for incontinence:

- Alpha-blockers: Terazosin (Hytrin), doxazosin (Cardura), tamsulosin (Flomax), and alfzozin (Uroxatral) are used to treat problems caused by prostate enlargement and bladder outlet obstruction. They act by relaxing the smooth muscle of the prostate and bladder neck, allowing normal urine flow and preventing abnormal bladder contractions that can lead to urge incontinence.
- 5-alpha reductase inhibitors: Finasteride (Proscar) and dutasteride (Advodart) work by inhibiting the production of the male hormone DHT, which is thought to be responsible for prostate enlargement. These 5-alpha reductase inhibitors may help to relieve voiding problems by shrinking an enlarged prostate.
- Imipramine: Marketed as Tofranil, this drug belongs to a class of drugs called tricyclic antidepressants. It relaxes muscles and blocks nerve signals that might cause bladder spasms.
- Antispasmodics: Propantheline (Pro-Banthine), tolterodine (Detrol LA), oxybutynin (Ditropan XL), darifenacin (Enablex), trospium chloride (Sanctura), and solifenacin succinate (VESIcare) belong to a class of drugs that work by relaxing the bladder muscle and relieving spasms. Their most common side effect is dry mouth, although large doses may cause blurred vision, constipation, a fast heartbeat, headache, and flushing.

(MedicineNet).

### **4 Tips for Coping with an Enlarged Prostate**

When a man reaches about age 25, his prostate begins to grow. This natural growth is called benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) and it is the most common cause of prostate enlargement. BPH is a benign condition that does not lead to prostate cancer, though the two problems can coexist.

Although 50% to 60% of men with BPH may never develop any symptoms, others find that BPH can make life miserable. The symptoms of BPH include:

- a hesitant, interrupted, weak urine stream
- urgency, leaking, or dribbling
- a sense of incomplete emptying
- more frequent urination, especially at night.

As a result, many men seek treatment. The good news is that treatments are constantly being improved. Patients and their physicians now have more medications to choose from, so if one doesn't do the trick, another can be prescribed. And thanks to some refinements, surgical treatments are more effective and have fewer side effects than ever before.

But there are some things men dealing with BPH can do on their own. When symptoms are not particularly bothersome, watchful waiting may be the best way to proceed. This involves regular monitoring to make sure complications aren't developing, but no treatment. For more troubling symptoms, most doctors begin by recommending a combination of lifestyle changes and medication. Often this will be enough to relieve the worst symptoms and prevent the need for surgery.

Four simple steps can help relieve some of the symptoms of BPH:

1. Some men who are nervous and tense urinate more frequently. Reduce stress by exercising regularly and practicing relaxation techniques such as meditation.
2. When you go to the bathroom, take the time to empty your bladder completely. This will reduce the need for subsequent trips to the toilet.
3. Talk with your doctor about all prescription and over-the-counter medications you're taking; some may contribute to the problem. Your doctor may be able to adjust dosages or change your schedule for taking these drugs, or he or she may prescribe different medications that cause fewer urinary problems.
4. Avoid drinking fluids in the evening, particularly caffeinated and alcoholic beverages. Both can affect the muscle tone of the bladder, and both stimulate the kidneys to produce urine, leading to night time urination.

(Harvard Medical School).

### **Enlarged Prostate Gland and Saw Palmetto**

Talk to a professional healthcare provider before taking any over-the-counter medicines.

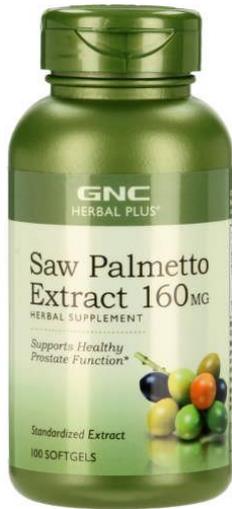
[Picture Credit: Saw Palmetto Palm]

The saw palmetto is a short, scrubby palm. Its fan-shaped leaves have sharp, saw-toothed edges that give the plant its name. Dense clumps of saw palmetto can form an impenetrable thicket. The abundant 2-cm-long berries are harvested and are dried for medicinal use.



It is used primarily for its activity in enlarged prostate gland (benign prostatic hyperplasia [BPH]). Saw palmetto is used to treat symptoms of BPH, including reducing urinary

frequency, increasing urinary flow, and decreasing nighttime urination. Saw palmetto may delay the need for prostate surgery. The mechanism of action of saw palmetto is unknown.



Typical dosages of standardised extracts range from 100 to 400 mg given twice daily for benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH). No contraindications have been identified.

[Picture Credit: Saw Palmetto]

Increased blood thinning by warfarin was reported while using saw palmetto. However, this may have been caused by something other than saw palmetto. Until more data are available, patients taking warfarin should consult their health care provider before taking saw palmetto.

Saw palmetto is generally well tolerated, with occasional reports of adverse gastrointestinal effects.

Research revealed little or no information regarding toxicology with the use of saw palmetto.

Saw Palmetto is available from most pharmacies.

(Drugs.com: Ju, *et al.* 2015; Latil, *et al.*, 2015; Morgia, *et al.*, 2013).

### **Medical Disclaimer**

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### Pelvic Floor Muscles

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**Saw Palmetto**

[https://clicks.co.za/gnc\\_herbal-plus-saw-palmetto-extract-160mg-100-capsules/p/221800?gclid=CMXJ66WE29QCFc677QodihcPKQ](https://clicks.co.za/gnc_herbal-plus-saw-palmetto-extract-160mg-100-capsules/p/221800?gclid=CMXJ66WE29QCFc677QodihcPKQ)

**Saw Palmetto Palm**

<http://www.newhealthadvisor.com/saw-palmetto-hair-loss.html>

**WebMD**

<http://www.webmd.com/urinary-incontinence-oab/picture-of-the-bladder#1>