



The British Association of Urological Surgeons

Comparison of treatment options for overactive bladder

Ways to help an overactive bladder

This leaflet gives you simple, easy-to-read details about your options. Expert doctors in the UK have written it. Please also remember the advice your own doctor or nurse has already given you.

What is an overactive bladder?

An overactive bladder makes you feel like you need to pee often or suddenly.

How can it be treated?

There are different ways to help. Each one works differently for different people. Some may work well, others may not. Some may cause problems, others may not. This guide explains each option.

1 — Lifestyle changes

What it is	There are 3 things that may help: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drink less caffeine and alcohol. Caffeine is found in tea, coffee and fizzy drinks.• Do pelvic floor exercises. These are special movements that help strengthen the muscles that control when you pee. A nurse or therapist can teach you how to do them.• Train your bladder. This means learning to wait longer between pees.
How well it works	More than half the people feel better.
Problems	None known.
Good points	Simple and can help many people.
Things to think about	It takes effort. You need to keep trying. Try not to give up.

2 — Vaginal oestrogen

This is a treatment for women.

What it is	There are 2 ways to use vaginal oestrogen: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A cream.• A small tablet placed inside your vagina. We call this tablet a pessary.
How well it works	About half the people feel better.
Problems	It may cause a sore vagina.
Good points	It can help. Most people cope well.
Things to think about	Only women who have gone through menopause can use it. It is not suitable for women who have had breast cancer.

3 — Tablets to stop your bladder squeezing too often

What it is	You swallow these tablets. They work on the nerve signals to your bladder. They work by relaxing your bladder muscle. Your bladder will not squeeze too often or too quickly. We call them anticholinergic drugs. They have names like oxybutynin, tolterodine, trospium, darifenacin, fenoteridine and solifenacin.
How well it works	About 4 out of 10 people keep using them for a long time.
Problems	About 2 out of 10 people get a dry mouth. About 1 out of 10 people have constipation.
Good points	It can help some people. You do not need an operation.
Things to think about	Some people get side effects. They raise the chance of getting dementia. This is more likely if you take them with other similar medicines.

4 — Tablets to calm your bladder

What it is	You swallow these tablets. They help your bladder relax whilst it fills up. We call them beta-3 agonist drugs. They have names like mirabegron.
How well it works	About half the people keep using them for a long time.
Problems	You may get high blood pressure. They may change your heart rhythm. Some people get cold-like symptoms.
Good points	They can help some people. They usually causes fewer side effects than anticholinergic tablets.
Things to think about	They are not suitable for people with very high blood pressure. They are not suitable for people with some types of heart problems.

5 — Botox injections

What it is	This injection is called Botulinum toxin-A. It is injected into your bladder using a tiny camera. The camera goes into the bladder through your water pipe. A small needle puts medicine into the bladder wall. This is done while you are awake. You will have medicine to numb the area.
How well it works	About 7 out of 10 people feel better.
Problems	About 2 out of 10 people get an infection in their pee. About 2 out of 10 people have trouble peeing after these injections. Some people may need to use a soft tube to empty their bladder. We call this a catheter.
Good points	These injections work very well.
Things to think about	You will need to have the injections regularly.

6 — Nerve signal device

What it is	We call this sacral neuromodulation. The doctor puts a small electronic device inside your lower back. This sends signals to your brain. It helps to control bladder nerves. This needs 2 small operations. The first one makes sure it will help. The second one puts the device in properly.
How well it works	About 7 out of 10 people feel better.
Problems	The device may get infected. This is very rare.
Good points	It works well. It's a small operation. You usually won't need to have it done again.
Things to think about	Needs 2 operations. It may stop working after a while.

7 — Making your bladder bigger

What it is	This is a big operation. We call it an augmentation enterocystoplasty. You will need to stay in hospital for about a week. A piece of your bowel is sewn into your bladder to make it bigger.
How well it works	About 8 out of 10 people feel better.
Problems	About 7 out of 10 people need to use a tube to empty their bladder after this operation. We call this tube a catheter. Pee or bowel leaks can happen. Bowel leaks are rare but may need more surgery.
Good points	It may help when other treatments have not worked. The results can last a long time.

Things to think about	<p>It is a big operation.</p> <p>You may have problems afterwards.</p> <p>You may see slime in your pee.</p> <p>You may get stones or pee infections.</p> <p>Some people need to use a tube to empty their bladder after this operation. We call this tube a catheter.</p>
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8 — Making a new way for pee to leave the body

What it is	This is a big operation. We call it an ileal conduit urinary diversion. You stay in hospital for about 2 weeks. Pee is sent through a small tube to a bag on your tummy.
How well it works	About 8 out of 10 people feel better.
Problems	<p>You may have pee or bowel leaks. They are rare. They will need more surgery.</p> <p>Pee may not drain well from the kidneys. You will need to wear a bag on your tummy to collect pee.</p>
Good points	It can help you feel better and enjoy life more.
Things to think about	<p>It is a big operation.</p> <p>You may get stones or pee infections. You may get kidney problems.</p> <p>You will need to empty the pee bag.</p> <p>You will be shown how to look after yourself.</p>

Important

We have worked hard to make this leaflet clear and correct. But it cannot replace advice from your own doctor or nurse. Always ask them if you are worried or unsure.

What should you do with this leaflet?

You can keep this leaflet. If you have more questions, ask your doctor or nurse. They can explain more.

Online access

You can see this leaflet on the internet.

Scan the special picture (QR code).



<https://rb.gy/jf8y0a>

Feedback

We'd love to know what you think! You can share your thoughts by emailing us at admin@baus.org.uk

Questions and notes

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