

# Male Bladder Pathway Toolkit

All questions need to be asked as many people have multiple continence problems to be addressed.  
If the answer is **YES** to any of the questions, follow the Pathway Guidance.

Question	Urinary Symptoms	Pathway Guidance		
1	Do you find it difficult to start urination or it takes a while before you can start urinating?	Enlargement of Prostate	→	Key Message 1
2	Do you have a problem with dribbling (small drops of urine) after you have urinated?	Enlargement of Prostate	→	Key Message 1
3	Do you feel that when you pass urine you have not completely emptied?	Enlargement of Prostate	→	Key Message 1
4	Do you leak urine if you cough sneeze laugh or lift something?	Stress Incontinence	→	Key Message 2
5	Do you get a strong feeling you need to pass urine and then when you get to the toilet there is only a small amount to pass?	Urinary Urgency	→	Key Message 3
6	Do you get a strong urge to pass urine and have difficulty holding on or maybe have an accident before you get to the toilet?	Urinary Urgency	→	Key Message 3
7	Does your bladder empty without any warning?	Spontaneous Emptying	→	Key Message 4

## Male Bladder Key Message 1

**If YES to Question 1, 2 or 3.**

**This may be Enlargement of the Prostate Male Bladder**

The prostate is shaped like a doughnut and the urethra, the tube from your bladder passes through the centre of the doughnut shaped prostate. If the prostate gets bigger it can therefore press on the urethra and make it difficult to pass water.

Once you have passed water the last few drops can end up in your pants. Making sure that the penis is straight and not bent into a 'u' shape due to restrictive clothing when urinating. If you put some pressure underneath the scrotum and milk the penis it can stop this happening. Another way of helping can be to do a strong pelvic floor exercise and then consciously relaxing this will let the sphincter relax and allow the last few drops to come away. Do not strain to empty as this will cause the sphincter to contract, trapping urine in the tube which will come out into your pants. Do not rush to finish voiding.

A feeling of not completely emptying may also be associated with enlargement of the prostate.

It would be important to make an appointment with your GP regarding these symptoms. They may take a blood test and may examine you to check if the prostate is enlarged and give you advice.

## Male Bladder Key Message 2

**If YES to Question 2**

It is likely that you have a problem with weakness of your pelvic floor muscles.

**If Yes to Question 4**

- Does the person have a chronic cough or asthma?  
If YES then the advice is to see their practice nurse to try to get the cough or asthma more controlled.

**This is probably Stress Incontinence**

- Is the person constipated?
- If YES – See Bowel Key Message 1  
Constipation and the weight and hardness of the stool will contribute to symptoms of stress incontinence.
- Does the person do a lot of heavy lifting or high impact exercises?  
If YES then the person should be advised to decrease the level of this activity for 3-4 months and concentrate on pelvic floor exercises.

### **Exercise Advice**

Start pelvic floor exercises. Give leaflet.  
There are leaflets for men.

### Male Bladder Key Message 3

**If YES to Question 5 or 6**

**This is likely to be Urinary Urgency**

It is likely that your bladder is irritated

**FIRST** – Does the person have a bladder infection? They may need to have a urine sample checked by their practice nurse. Urgency can be a symptom of a bladder infection.

Urgency can often go with frequency so check that the person has not started to develop an Urgency / Frequency Pattern. That is, desperate to go, going just in case and then finding that they are going to the toilet so often that it starts to interrupt their life.

#### **Lifestyle Advice**

- Bladder irritants – Caffeine (coffee, tea, Diet Coke, Red Bull, Lucozade), undiluted pure fruit juice, fizzy drinks, tomatoes, acidic fruits, alcohol.
- Not drinking enough – Urine if it becomes too concentrated by the person not drinking it will irritate the bladder and make the person want to urinate more.
- The urge to go to the toilet can be decreased by applying pressure to the perineum. The area of skin between the testes and the anus. In a car this can be done using a tennis ball. At home by sitting on a hard chair. By sitting on your heel. Holding on to the area with firm pressure.
- Urgency can also be helped by using pelvic floor exercises to control the urge.

If these do not help then the person should self refer to Physiotherapy or the Joint Continence Clinic for further help.

### Bladder Key Message 4

**If YES to question 7**

**This is Spontaneous Emptying**

If your bladder empties spontaneously and there is no warning often the amount that leaks is quite considerable and the effect can be devastating.

**FIRST** - Does the person have a bladder infection? This can cause the person to lose urine without any warning.

Sometimes a person can lose water spontaneously but they do get a weak or fleeting warning. This could be bladder urgency or an over-active bladder and should not be confused with a Neurogenic Bladder.

This can be a sign of a bladder that is acting by itself. It does not have the brain inhibiting it's emptying and therefore there may not be a warning perceived in the brain that this is going to happen. The bladder just decides that it is full enough and is going to empty and there is no control mechanism.

If this is truly the case then the person should make an appointment with their GP.