

I use the bathroom more than 10 times a day lately. Should I see a doctor?

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If frequent voiding and the need to know where the nearest bathroom is located whenever you leave your home bother you, then you are not alone. This is a problem that affects one in eight women. The good news is that there are great treatments.

On average, women should feel the urge to void every 3-4 hours during the day or 6-7 times in a 24-hour period. Depending on when the urge to void is greatest, there may be different explanations for why you feel the urge to void so frequently.

The bladder can overact and give the sensation that it needs to empty prior to being even moderately full. In other cases, you may have a bladder infection or bladder stones or bladder lesions that instigate the urge to void. In general, therapy begins with learning to understand how your bladder is functioning by recording a bladder diary.

A bladder diary is a record of all of the fluid intake and output over a given period of time, usually three 24-hour periods. Because the kidneys make urine every hour of every day (24/7) the bladder's dysfunction may even be due to the untimely overproduction of urine at inconvenient times, like at night. A bladder diary will help elucidate the bladder and kidney function.

Once you have recorded a bladder diary, then your doctor may have you begin a bladder retraining regimen, designed to help you re-teach your bladder when it is appropriate to feel the urge to void. Such conservative measures are very effective in most people.

Keep in mind that events in your life can affect bladder function – just ask a physically well-conditioned Olympic athlete who is nearing a competition and is frantically searching for the bathroom. Ultimately, even if conservative therapies do not work, there are other effective treatments, including medications and neurostimulation.

If you are voiding frequently call your doctor because it is not normal. You may think it is just part of life, but it may not be and does not need to be. Most primary care physicians can help you. If simple measures do not work there are specialists such as urogynecologists who can help. You do not have to suffer with being tethered to the nearest bathroom when you leave the house. Urinary frequency can be treated.