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Self-management of OAB

The underlined terms are listed in the glossary.

The symptoms of overactive bladder are often bothersome but not life-threatening. OAB symptoms can last for a long time and there is no simple cure. There are various treatment options available. In most cases, self-management is offered as the first step of treatment. It is common to try different treatment options to figure out which one works best in your individual situation. You can discuss this with your doctor.

You can actively manage your symptoms. The following self-management measures may help you:

- Together with your doctor you can discuss adapting when, what, and how much you drink
- If urine leakage is a problem, your doctor may recommend wearing an absorbent pad to prevent wetting your clothes
- If recommended by your doctor, encourage yourself to “hold it” longer when you feel the urgency to urinate. This will train your bladder and gradually increase the time between toilet visits

- Pelvic muscles can weaken with age. Squeezing the pelvic floor muscles, known as Kegel exercise, can help to suppress the urgent desire to urinate, and regain muscle strength

Lifestyle advice

In addition, general lifestyle changes can help manage your symptoms and improve your quality of life.

- Drink at least 1-1.5 litre every day and discuss with your doctor if you can drink more
- Drink more if you live in a hot climate or do a lot of physical exercise



Useful link

Read more about continence products, such as different types of pads, at the Continence Product Advisor website:
<http://www.continenceproductadvisor.org/>

- Drink less before and during long trips
- Drink less in the evening to avoid getting up at night to urinate
- Reduce alcohol and caffeine because they increase urine production and irritate the bladder
- Certain foods can irritate the bladder and worsen OAB symptoms. It may be helpful to reduce artificial sweeteners, spicy foods, citrus fruits and juices, caffeine and soft drinks in your diet
- Maintain a healthy weight (your Body Mass Index should be between 18-25 kg/m²). Reducing your weight may lead to improvement in urine leakage symptoms

This information was updated in January 2014.

This leaflet is part of EAU Patient Information on OAB. It contains general information about overactive bladder symptoms. If you have any specific questions about your individual medical situation you should consult your doctor or other professional healthcare provider.

This information was produced by the European Association of Urology (EAU). The content of this leaflet is in line with the EAU Guidelines.

You can find this and other information on urological diseases at our website: <http://patients.uroweb.org>

Series contributors:

Prof. Christopher Chapple	Sheffield, United Kingdom
Prof. Stavros Gravas	Larissa, Greece
Dr. Nadir Osman	Sheffield, United Kingdom