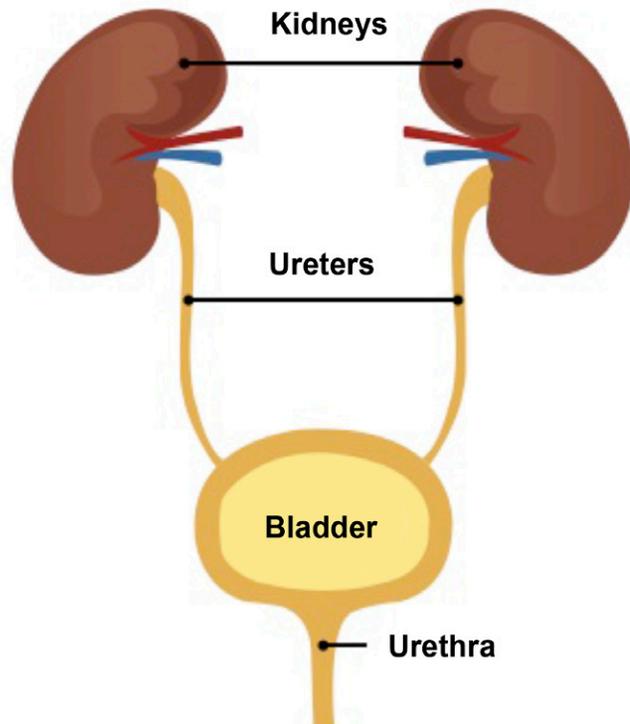




# Coping with urges and leaks?

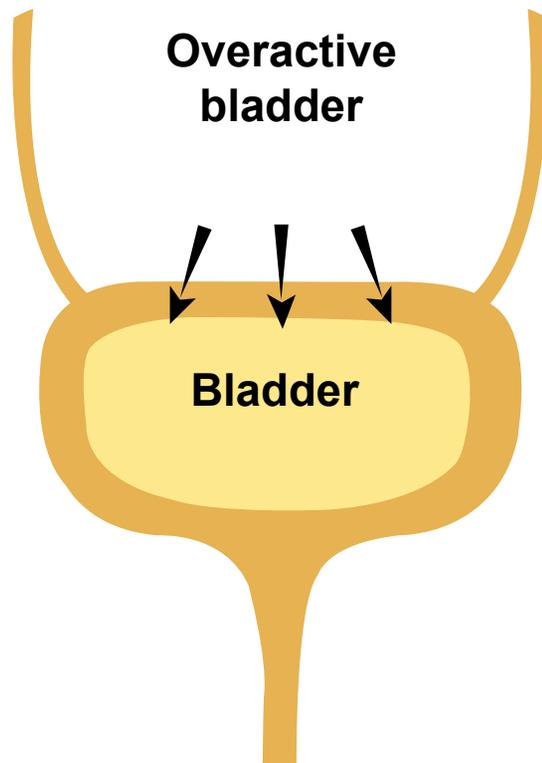
Let me help you learn more about overactive bladder (OAB) symptoms and ways to help manage them

## “HOW DOES THE BLADDER WORK?”



- Within the urinary tract, the kidneys make urine and the bladder stores it
- When it is not full of urine, the bladder is relaxed
  - Nerve signals in your brain let you know when your bladder is getting full
  - Once you are ready to urinate, the brain sends a signal to the bladder
  - Then the bladder muscles squeeze (or contract), forcing the urine out through the urethra (the tube that carries urine from your body)
- If your bladder is working normally, you can delay urination for some time

## “HOW DOES THE BLADDER WORK?”



OAB stands for overactive bladder.

It is **NOT** a disease. Rather, it's the name for a group of bladder symptoms.

- OAB can happen when:
  - Nerve signals between your bladder and brain tell your bladder to empty **even though it isn't full**
  - The muscles in your bladder are **too active**
  - Either way, your bladder muscles contract to pass urine **before they should**
- These contractions cause the **sudden, strong need to urinate, called urgency**

## “WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF OAB?”

People with OAB regularly experience one or more of the following symptoms:

### **URGENCY**

A sudden and overwhelming need to urinate right away.

### **FREQUENCY**

Urinating 8 or more times per day or what feels like too often.

### **URGE INCONTINENCE**

A sudden urge followed by urine leakage (a wetting accident).

### **NOCTURIA**

Waking up 1 or more times during the night to use the bathroom.

**Some of these symptoms can be the result of a urinary tract infection (UTI), an illness, damage to nerves, or a side effect of a medication. Your doctor will check to make sure nothing else is causing your symptoms.**

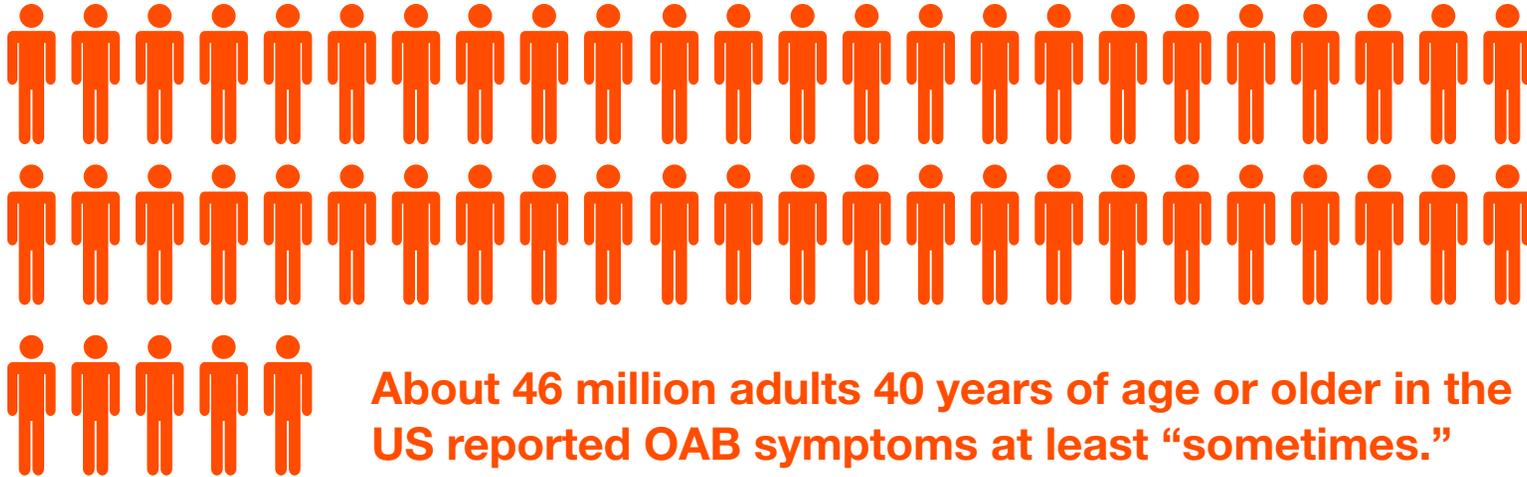
## “WHAT ARE THE FACTS ABOUT OAB?”

**Don't let OAB myths prevent you from getting the help you need.  
Learn the facts...**

- OAB is **NOT** “just part of being a woman”
- OAB is **NOT** “just having an ‘enlarged’ (big) prostate”
- OAB is **NOT** “just a normal part of getting older”
- OAB is **NOT** caused by something you did
- Surgery is **NOT** the only treatment for OAB
- There **ARE** treatments for OAB that can help manage symptoms
- There **ARE** treatments that many people with OAB find helpful
- There **ARE** treatments that can help, even if your symptoms aren't severe or if you don't have urine leaks

## “HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE OAB?”

### OAB is a common condition in the United States



Unfortunately, many people do not seek medical help because they mistakenly believe that:

- Bladder control problems are an inevitable part of aging
- There is no treatment available
- Discussing their problem with their doctor will be too embarrassing

## “WHO IS AT RISK FOR OAB?”

As you grow older, you're at higher risk for OAB

### GENDER

- Both **men and women** report symptoms of OAB
- Women who have gone through **menopause** have a higher than normal risk
- Men who have had **prostate problems** also seem to have an increased risk for OAB

### HEALTH CONDITIONS

- People with **diseases** that **affect the brain or nervous system**, such as stroke and multiple sclerosis (MS), are at higher risk for OAB

### DIET

- Food and drinks that can bother your bladder (like **caffeine, alcohol, and very spicy foods**) may make OAB symptoms worse

## “HOW CAN OAB AFFECT ME?”

You often feel that you **“have to go”** right away.



This feeling makes you afraid you won't **make it to the bathroom in time.**



You may **leak urine**, even if you get to the bathroom right away.



You may go to the bathroom **many times a day**, or get up more than once at night to go.



You may be afraid to be too far from a bathroom, causing you to **stop going out with friends and family.**

## “HOW ARE OAB SYMPTOMS TREATED?”

There are treatments that can help you manage your OAB symptoms. Your doctor may use one treatment alone or a combination. Treatment choices include:

### LIFESTYLE CHANGES

- **Changing what you eat and drink** to see if less caffeine, alcohol, and/or spicy foods will reduce your symptoms
- Keeping a **daily “bladder diary”** of your trips to the bathroom
- Going to the bathroom at **scheduled times** during the day
- Doing “quick flick” **pelvic exercises** to help you relax your bladder muscle when you feel a strong urge to urinate

### PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

- Your doctor may **prescribe drugs** to help with your OAB symptoms

## **“I’M NERVOUS ABOUT TALKING TO MY DOCTOR...”**

**You may feel embarrassed to talk about your OAB symptoms.**

**But remember, many others have OAB. And doctors are used to hearing about all kinds of concerns.**

**Don’t wait. There are many ways to treat OAB.  
You just have to ask for help.**

## “HOW SHOULD I TALK TO MY DOCTOR ABOUT MY URGES AND LEAKS?”

**Answer and then use the following questions as a starting point for a conversation with your doctor about your urges and leaks...**

- 1 How many times per day do you rush to the bathroom and worry that you won't make it? \_\_\_\_\_ times
- 2 How many times do you use the bathroom each day? \_\_\_\_\_ times
- 3 How many times a week do you limit your fluid intake to avoid so many trips to the bathroom? \_\_\_\_\_ times
- 4 How many times have you leaked urine this week? \_\_\_\_\_ times
- 5 How many times do you use the bathroom in the middle of the night? \_\_\_\_\_ times
- 6 Do you make sure you know where to find the bathroom, no matter where you are?  Y  N
- 7 How are your symptoms affecting your daily activities? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## “HOW DO I PREPARE FOR MY DOCTOR APPOINTMENT?”

**You may feel uneasy talking with your doctor about your bladder symptoms. A little planning beforehand will make you more confident...**

- **BE PREPARED:** Before your visit, gather some important information, such as a list of the medications you take and past/current illnesses or injuries
- **BRING A FRIEND:** Ask a relative or good friend to go with you to your visit
- **BRING UP THE TOPIC:** If your doctor doesn't ask you about your bladder symptoms, bring the topic up yourself—you can even use the questionnaire you just filled out to help start the conversation
- **TAKE NOTES:** Bring a pad of paper and a pen to take notes
- **SPEAK FREELY:** Tell your doctor about all of your symptoms, making sure to explain how they are interrupting your day
- **ASK QUESTIONS:** Knowing more about treatment options is the best way to take control of the problem
- **TALK ABOUT FOLLOW-UP CARE:** Finally, ask your doctor when you should make a second appointment

## “HOW MIGHT MY DOCTOR DIAGNOSE OAB?”

### DURING YOUR VISIT, YOUR DOCTOR MAY:

- **Gather facts** about:
  - Your past and current health problems
  - The symptoms you’re having and how long you have had them
  - What medicines you take
  - How much liquid you drink during the day
- Give you a **physical exam** to look for something that may be causing your symptoms, including examining your abdomen
- Ask you to keep a “**bladder diary**” to learn more about your day-to-day symptoms
- **Collect a sample of your urine** to check for infection or blood and/or perform other tests, such as a bladder ultrasound, if needed