

## Bladder Control Exercises (Kegel Exercises)

You may be able to improve urine control by doing special exercises called "Kegels." These exercises can help strengthen pelvic floor muscles that can help keep urine from leaking.

Kegels can be done anywhere. But doing them right takes practice.

### Tips for doing Kegel exercises

#### Here are the basics:

- Find the muscles by imagining trying to control passing gas. Or, think of the muscles you use to try to stop the flow of urine.
- You can try to isolate these muscles by suddenly stopping the flow of urine as you are urinating a full bladder.
- Squeeze the muscles and hold for 3 seconds. (Women should get a lifting feeling in the area around the vagina. Or a "pulling in" of the rectum.)
- Then completely relax the muscle for a count of 3. (It's important to control both the tightening and relaxing of the muscle.)
- Do this 10 times at first. If this is very easy, try holding for 5 seconds. Rest between contractions for the same amount of time.

Try to do at least 30 to 50 Kegel exercises per day. **DO NOT do the Kegels while you are urinating (except at first, when you are trying to isolate the muscles).** Exercise in sets of 10 at first. As you get stronger, you can do more sets fewer times a day. Exercising each day is best, but 3 or 4 times a week will still help. The more you perform these exercises, the stronger your pelvic floor muscles will get. And the faster you'll improve. Alternate between lying down, sitting, or standing when doing the exercises. This will help you to have more control.

**TIP:** For an easy reminder, set a time for doing your Kegel exercises every day—like in the car on the way to work, on your lunch break, or at night while watching TV.