

# DIET AND HABITS THAT CAN AFFECT YOUR BLADDER

## Common Bladder Irritants Found in Foods and Drinks

Certain foods, liquids and beverages, medications and even herbs can “trigger” your bladder symptoms. Their effect on the bladder is not always understood and the same food or liquid may affect different people and their bladders in different ways. Check the lists found here to see if any of them are adding to your symptoms. If you find one, stop them for a few days to see if your bladder symptoms improve. Then add them back in your diet and see if you notice any changes.

**Caffeine** is a bladder irritant and can cause you go urinate (pee) more often. The effect of caffeine can be seen within 30 minutes. Caffeine is found in chocolate, soft drinks, over-the-counter medications, and is used as a flavoring agent in many baked goods and processed foods. As a rule of thumb, dark chocolate drinks and candy contain the most caffeine because they contain more cocoa than milk chocolate. Americans average more than 400 mg of caffeine intake every day. The FDA has listed more than 1000 drugs you can buy off the shelf in pharmacies and drug stores that contain caffeine. Caffeine may not be listed on labels. Here, are the most common caffeine sources.

Type	Serving size	# mg Caffeine	Type	Serving size	# mg Caffeine
<b>COFFEE</b>					
Brewed, drip	7.5 oz.	115-175	Instant	7.5 oz.	65-100
Brewed, percolated	7.5 oz.	80-135	Decaffeinated	5 oz.	2-4
<b>TEA (black or green)</b>					
1-Minute Brew	5 oz.	20-34	Instant	5 oz.	30
3-Minute Brew	5 oz.	35-46	Iced Tea	12 oz.	67-76
5-Minute Brew	5 oz.	39-			
<b>SOFT DRINKS</b>					
Coca-Cola	12 oz.	60	Mountain Dew	12 oz.	54
Diet Coke	12 oz.	46	Monster Energy	8 oz.	92
Pepsi-Cola	12 oz.	43	Red Bull	8.4 oz.	83
Diet Pepsi	12 oz.	36	Jolt Cola	12 oz.	71
<b>Chocolate Desserts:</b>					
Brownie (with nut)	1.25 oz.	8	Cake	1/16 of 9"	14
Ice Cream	2/3 cup	5	Pudding	2 cup	6
<b>Chocolate Candy &amp; Drink:</b>					
Milk Chocolate	1 oz.	1-15	Baking Chocolate	1 oz.	25-35
Dark Chocolate	1 oz.	20	Hot Chocolate	6 oz.	5
<b>Medications</b>					
Anacin	2 tablets	64	Dristan	2 tablets	32
Excedrin	2 tablets	130	Sinarest	1 tablet	30
Midol	2 tablets	64	No-Doz	2 tablets	200
Norgesic	2 tablets	30	Vivarin	1 tablet	200
Fiorinal	2 tablets	80			

### Other Irritants

Alcohol (e.g. beer, wine)  
Milk/milk products  
Artificial sweetener – aspartame (Nutrasweet) found in Equal

Very spiced foods  
Citrus juices & fruits  
Sugar, honey

Tomato based foods (e.g. tomato sauce)  
Carbonated beverages (e.g., soda, seltzer)  
Corn syrup

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**HERBS: the ones below contain active ingredients that may affect your bladder**

Herb	Bladder Effect	Herb	Bladder Effect
Cornsilk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is very mild and nontoxic</li><li>• May make tissues of the bladder stronger.</li><li>• May help lessen urine leakage &amp; bed-wetting.</li></ul>	Buchu leaf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acts on the kidneys by increasing the amount of urine &amp; wastes.</li><li>• A combination of concentrated cranberry juice and Buchu leaf that is used as a diuretic.</li></ul>
Parsley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Has a diuretic effect (i.e., increases the amount of urine produced) by preventing the body from absorbing salt.</li></ul>	<i>Uva ursi</i> leaf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The main ingredient, arbutin, can disinfect the urine, especially if the urine is alkaline.</li><li>• Can also be a strong diuretic.</li></ul>

## Fluids and Drinks!

What and how much you drink can lead to bladder control problems (bladder leaks or incontinence). Many people who have bladder problems will drink less, hoping they will pee less often. While drinking less liquid does result in less urine in your bladder, a smaller amount of urine may be more highly concentrated and irritate the lining of your bladder. Concentrated urine (dark yellow, strong smelling) may cause you to pee more often. Also, drinking too little fluids can cause dehydration. So, do not limit your fluids to control your bladder unless your doctor or nurse tells you to.

Too much fluid can also lead to bladder control problems. Some will increase the amount they drink because they think more urine in the bladder will cause less bladder urgency. But drinking too much fluid will cause you to go to the bathroom more often.

So, avoid extremes in the amount you drink (neither too much nor too little). You should “drink to your thirst,” and your urine should be pale yellow. Do not drink large amounts at one time; instead, sip 2 to 3 ounces every 20 to 30 minutes. It is very unlikely that you will need to drink more than 2 quarts (or 8 cups) of total fluids each day.

Water is the best fluid to drink! Grape, cranberry, apple, and cherry juices are thirst quenchers that usually are not irritating to the bladder. Cranberry juice may help control urine odor and make the urine more acidic. Acidic urine may prevent the spread of bacteria.

## Can Foods or Medications Affect My Urine?

Some foods, like asparagus, can cause your urine to smell odd. Some medications, like those you may take for bladder pain, may cause your urine to have a strange color or odor. Another cause of foul smelling urine is a bladder infection. So if you notice that your urine has a strong odor and you have not eaten anything that would cause this, report this to your doctor or nurse.

## Other Things That May Affect Your Bladder

- Women, more than men, are at risk for getting bladder infections. If you are someone who has frequent infections, do not wear nylon underwear and pantyhose. Cotton underwear is better. Do not use perfumed toilet tissue or sanitary napkins because the dyes and perfumes may be irritating. Also, do not take bubble baths or douche.
- Being overweight may be part of the cause of your bladder leaks (incontinence) and is also a dangerous health problem. Many women and men notice improved bladder control if they lose weight.
- The nicotine found in cigarettes can be irritating to the bladder lining and smoking is a cause of bladder cancer. Coughing from smoking may lead to bladder leaks during coughing spasms.