Helping Your Bladder To Empty

Problems with bladder control or urinary leaking may be caused by conditions that keep the bladder from emptying completely. When urinating (passing your water) occurs, some urine may stay in the bladder. This remaining urine can cause you to feel more urgency and the need to urinate more often. Not fully emptying your bladder can also increase your risk of a urinary tract or bladder infection.

What You Can do to Help Your Bladder Empty
Empty your bladder in a relaxed and private place. Worry and tension can make bladder emptying harder. Women should sit comfortably on the toilet seat and relax the pelvic floor muscle to void. Men can stand, but if it seems hard to urinate fully when standing, then you can sit. Do not push down on your bladder with your hands or stomach to help urinate.

What You Can Do To Urinate More Completely
You can help your bladder empty if you sit a certain way or urinate twice (called “double voiding”).
Here are ways to do it:
- Change the position of your upper body by rocking or leaning forward on the toilet, or
- Once you have stopped urinating, stand up, sit back down, lean forward, and try to void again, or
- When urinating stops, wait on the toilet for 3 to 5 minutes and then exhale through your mouth only, as if you are blowing through a straw. Then try urinating.

Other Ways To Help You Urinate
If you have a hard time relaxing to urinate, you can try these methods to trigger your bladder to contract:
- Place your hands in warm water, or
- Listen to running water, or
- Pour water over your groin, your penis, or outside the vagina or pubic area.
- Pushing down on your bladder (called “Credé maneuver” or bladder expression) may help if you do not have any problems with your sphincter (such as a condition called detrusor sphincter dyssynergia).

If you have a spinal cord injury or a paralysis that prevents your bladder from emptying completely, you may be able to find a “trigger” point to make your bladder muscle contract (squeeze down) and empty. Try these:
- “Suprapubic tapping,” which is drumming your fingers over you lower stomach, over your bladder.
- Pulling on your pubic hairs, stroking your stomach or inner thigh, digital anal stimulation (putting a finger in your anus, running water in the sink, placing the hands in a basin of warm water, drinking warm fluids, and pouring warm water on your perineum (private area)

Try each one and see which works best and is easiest.