

Pediatric Urology Associates, Ltd.

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TIMED VOIDING PROGRAM

Some Children Hold Their Urine Too Long

Many children with wetting or infections are infrequent voiders, but they can be hard to recognize. After toilet training, parents don't usually know when a child urinates and the intervals between urination may become surprisingly excessive. This is particularly true if a child has had urinary accidents or infections with burning. As a result, they may deliberately hold back on urinating. The result is stagnation (resulting in bacterial overgrowth) or spillage from an overfilled bladder.

You Can Lead a Horse to Water

It is almost impossible to make children void if they don't want to do so. Furthermore, if a child has a lot of emotional pressure or fear of punishment they may be unable to relax sufficiently to void effectively. Normal urination requires relaxation of the pelvic floor coordinated with contraction of the bladder muscle. The pelvic floor, like your biceps, is a muscle that you can voluntarily move, but the bladder muscle (like your heart or intestine) is an automatic muscle that you cannot order around. Normal voiding requires relaxation, not pushing and straining.

Voiding Habits (GIRLS):

- Sit back on toilet
- Foot support if necessary
- Relax, don't strain or push
- Knees apart
- Take your time
- When you are finished, relax and try again - there may be more

Voiding Habits (BOYS):

- Open fly completely
- Relax, don't strain, push or rush
- When finished, wait a moment and try again
- Sit if it helps

In a Timed Voiding Program you will try to relearn to empty the bladder **when it's time to go**, rather than waiting until you **have to go** (because by then it may be too late!). Voiding is done by the clock or by a schedule. The idea is to keep the bladder empty so urine will be less likely to leak or to get infected. Usually the timed voiding program is necessary only in the daytime.

When at home or at play an alarm watch may be a good way to remember when it's time to void. During school, however, it's better to establish a schedule such as:

- go to the bathroom as soon as you get to school
- go to the bathroom at the midmorning break
- go to the bathroom at the start of lunch time
- go to the bathroom at the end of lunch time
- go to the bathroom in midafternoon
- go to the bathroom just before leaving school
- once at home go by the clock => every two hours

When following this program, the voiding habits described above are important so that the bladder can be thoroughly emptied without straining.

Sometimes people will say that they "cannot void" or "do not have to void". This is rarely the case, because everyone makes urine continuously - so if the bladder has not been emptied in the past two hours there will be at least an ounce of urine in almost anyone. The job is to **learn to relax when it's time to urinate.**