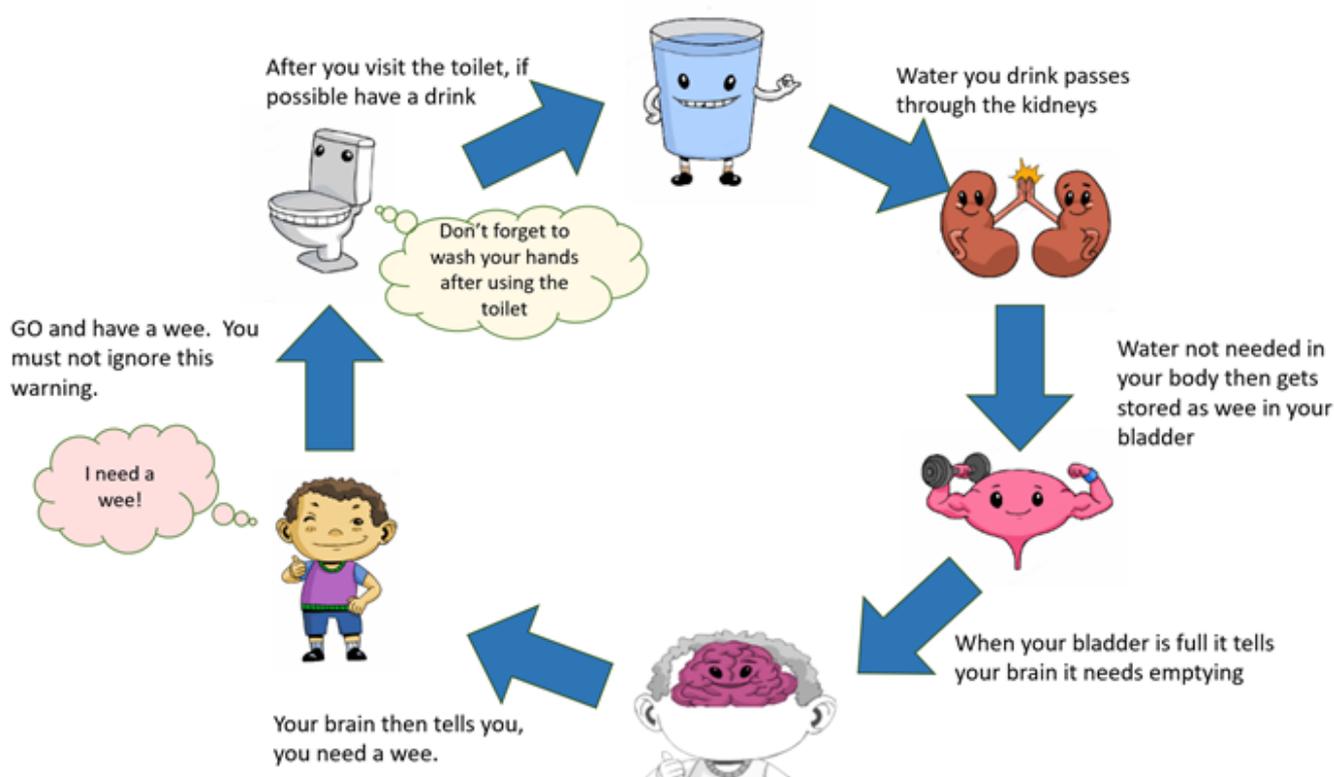


# How to: Train your bladder

Your bladder is a muscle. The more you exercise your bladder muscle the stronger it gets. This means it can hold more wee (urine). The more wee your bladder can hold during the day, the better the chances of being dry at night.

## How do I make wee?



## How big should my bladder be?

The size of your bladder (bladder capacity) usually depends on how old you are. Some of your body parts get bigger as you grow. This includes your bladder. Doctors and nurses sometimes use maths to find out how big your bladder should be. The formula for estimated bladder capacity is: your age in years + 1 multiplied by 30. For example, if you are 6 years old:  $6 + 1 \times 30 = 210$ . This suggests that your bladder should hold 210mls each time you have a wee.

## How do I measure my bladder size?

You will need an old measuring jug (in millilitres). Keep this by the toilet. When you need a wee, wee in the jug. Record the amount you wee, and pour it into the toilet. And don't forget to wash your hands! Ask your parent/carer for help if you need to. You'll need to do 5 random measurements, but don't measure your first wee in the morning. Look again at the estimated bladder capacity formula above to see how big your bladder should be.

## What if my bladder isn't big enough?

Firstly, don't worry. There are bladder exercises that you can follow to make your bladder bigger. This is where nurses and doctors need your help.

## Training your bladder

Look at the picture again showing how you make wee. The two most important parts of training your bladder are: 1: how much you drink during the day, 2: how often you go to the toilet for a wee.

The table below shows how much you should be drinking. If you don't drink enough, you won't be producing enough wee to make your bladder stronger and bigger. If you drink too much, your bladder might not cope which means you go to the toilet more often, sometimes more than twice within an hour.

Age (years)	Gender	Total drinks per day (ml)
4 - 8	Female	1000 - 1400
	Male	1000 - 1400
9 - 13	Female	1200 - 2100
	Male	1400 - 2300
14 - 18	Female	1400 - 2500
	Male	2100 - 3200

### Top tip 1:

If you're drinking much less than it says above, slowly increase how much you drink. For example, drink an extra 200mls per day. Once you get used to this, drink another 200mls. Keep drinking more each day until you reach your target intake. This is good for your bladder as it doesn't get shocked with the sudden increase in fluid.

### Top tip 2:

Drink water. Some drinks can tickle your bladder making it excited, thinking it's full when it's not. This is things like drinks with caffeine (coffee, tea, chocolate), fizzy drinks (cola, soda), and drinks with blackcurrant or citrus fruits like orange.

### Top tip 3:

Drink two thirds of your daily fluid intake between waking up and 3pm. Avoid cramming all your drinks in the afternoon as it will confuse your bladder muscle. **Remember** you're training your bladder to get stronger!

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## When should I go for a wee?

### Planned toilet visits

Plan to go six to seven times a day, ideally every two to three hours. Try using break times in school as your reminder to go the toilet. For example:

- Your first wee of the day is when you wake up
- If you have a 200ml glass of water with your breakfast, by morning break you should be ready for another wee
- If you drink 200mls during morning break, your next wee should be at lunch time
- Drink another 200ml glass of water at lunchtime as this will help digest your food
- If all goes well, you will need another wee just before school finishes
- Don't forget to drink another 200mls during the afternoon

So, that's already 4 wees and you have drunk about 800mls – well done! You only need to add 2-3 more wees, and 2-3 more drinks.

Children and young people whose planned intake is more than 1.5L per day should have a bigger drink of 250mls each time.

### Listening to your bladder.

Your bladder gives you at least two warnings – you must not ignore these. The warning signs feel like little tickles in your tummy, the more desperate for a wee you get the more warnings you have. You might feel like you have goosebumps or not be able to concentrate because all you can think is “I need a wee!”

When you feel the first sensation that you need to go for a wee, count to 5 seconds. After 5 seconds the feeling of needing a wee may go away. The next time you get the feeling, count to 5 again. Keep doing this until the feeling doesn't go away and go to the toilet.

Don't wait until you're too desperate for a wee as you might end up wetting yourself (especially if the toilet is far away) and you might lose the warning signs if you ignore them too often. Practise this at home at first so you don't have a wee accident at school.

**Go to the toilet when your bladder feels really full. By not going too soon you're increasing your bladder capacity. But remember not to hold on until you're too desperate.**

## How to contact us

The Berkshire Healthcare School Nurse team has a dedicated phone line for parents and carers, and for young people in Year 9 and above. It covers Bracknell Forest, Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham.

**Call 0300 365 0010, 9am-4pm Monday to Friday**

**[cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/school-nursing/](https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/school-nursing/)**