

## Prostate and Urinary Problems: Starting the Conversation

Are you bothered by a urination problem? More than half of men over age 40 are, and the older you are, the more bothersome the problems can become. In many cases, the cause is an enlarged prostate gland or an overactive bladder.

### What's normal for my age?

Your prostate gland gets larger as you age. Sometimes that causes problems with urination, and sometimes it doesn't.

As you get older, you should still have a good flow of urine and be able to hold a reasonable amount of urine before you need to empty your bladder. The force of the flow may vary from one man to the next, but you should have a good arc to your stream without hesitancy, without a flow that stops and starts, and without dribble.

**Did you know?** The normal adult bladder can hold about 2 cups of urine, but most adults feel the urge to urinate when the bladder is about half full.

### What's abnormal for my age?

A block in urinary flow is not normal. When your prostate gland gets bigger and squeezes your urethra, it may weaken, or even block, your flow of urine. Older men tend to have these problems more often than younger ones – at least 50% of men in their 60s, and 90% of men in their 90s have an enlarged prostate. This becomes a problem when it affects the urinary stream, causing a weak flow.

It's also not normal to urinate in small amounts or have to rush to the toilet to urinate. These symptoms may be a sign that your bladder is overactive.

Other symptoms of bladder problems include leaking urine before you can get to the toilet or waking up several times during the night to urinate.

Unlike prostate problems, bladder symptoms are more common in younger men.

**Did you know?** In men younger than 40, the prostate gland is typically the size of a whole walnut in the shell; by age 70, it has doubled to about the size of a lemon.

## How can you tell if it's a bladder problem or a prostate problem?

Your symptoms can tell a lot about whether you have a storage problem (bladder) or an emptying/removal (prostate) problem. You can also have both problems at the same time.

Bladder (storage) Problem	Prostate (emptying/removal) Problem
Urgent need to urinate	Hesitant flow or straining to urinate
Frequent need to urinate	Weak stream
Urinating at night	Intermittent flow (stops and starts)
Leaking urine before you make it to the toilet	Prolonged urination
Leaking because of stress	Dribbling after you're finished
Leaking for no reason	After urinating, feeling like your bladder is still holding urine

## What else could cause my urinary symptoms?

**Other conditions that cause urinary problems include:**

- Drinking alcohol or other fluids in the evening
- An infection in your bladder or kidney
- Prostate inflammation
- Impacted stool in your rectum
- Prescription medicines, including antidepressants and diuretics
- Slipped disc in your spine
- Recent back surgery
- Diabetes
- Multiple sclerosis
- Congestive heart failure
- Cancer in your bladder or prostate

**Did you know?** Men with severe urinary symptoms are 33% more likely to have a fall that causes a serious injury than men with mild symptoms. Their chance of having 2 falls is 63% higher.

*If you're concerned about urinary symptoms, talk with your doctor about them and the variety of treatments and lifestyle changes that can help.*