Coping With OAB Embarrassment

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How to Avoid Embarrassment With OAB

You may feel alone when it comes to having overactive bladder. The thing is, many people have problems with OAB. It is much more common than you think. Like you, many folks do not let anyone know that they have the problem and try to hide it. And if you are one that frequently visits the restroom, it can be nearly debilitating for you. You cannot enjoy a night out with friends because you spend half the time on the toilet.

There are ways to approach OAB and keep it from controlling your life. Here are some tips on getting it under control so you can enjoy life again:

- **Stay away from triggers.** It may be hard for you to give up some of your favorite beverages, but this is something that needs to be modified in order to avoid irritation of the bladder. The offenders? Alcohol, caffeinated soda pop (regular and diet), coffee (regular and decaf), acidic fruit juices, and tomato juice. Foods to avoid are spicy dishes, food made with tomatoes, and chocolate. Some say that artificial sweeteners can cause irritation as well.
- **Do your Kegel exercises.** Kegel exercises will help strengthen the pelvic floor muscles, so you can keep from having an accident while out and about. To do it, just squeeze the same muscles you use to stop urine from flowing. Squeeze them about 10 times, four times a day for the best results.
- **Follow your treatment plan to a "T."** Some patients are put on a schedule to urinate; you will need to be diligent in doing this as to keep your bladder empty. Set a reminder on your phone if you need to. Follow your doctor's recommendations.

- **Wear incontinence pads.** There are incontinence underwear products that are fitted and contain material to absorb odor. You should carry a few with you in case you need to change.
- **O.K., so you have an accident; don't fret about it.** Just take care of the situation and move on. You do not need to let it spoil your whole day. Remember, you are not the only one with OAB. The person in the next bathroom stall may have the same problem for all you know.
- **Try not to drink too much fluid.** Usually 64 ounces, or 8-eight ounce glasses should be sufficient.
- **Dress in dark slacks.** If you have an accident where the urine gets on your clothing, it will be less evident.
- **Sit close to the bathroom if out in public.** If you are going to a restaurant, sit at a table that is closest to the restroom.
- **If you have a mild urge to go, try to think of something else.** You may be able to deter the urge and put it off for a while. This will help to retrain your bladder as well.
- **Psychotherapy.** This is helpful if you are becoming negatively defined by the condition of OAB. It can help you overcome your negative self-image about OAB and aging.