

# What You Need to Know About Maintaining Bladder Health

## LEAKY BLADDER? YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Just like strengthening your arms or legs, the muscles of the pelvic floor are skeletal muscles and respond well to strengthening and training.

### TRAINING YOUR PELVIC FLOOR

- 1** • Sit in a comfortable, supported position.  
• Concentrate on the feel of the support of the chair from your head to your feet.  
• Feel the support and relax into it, letting go of any tension through your head, neck, shoulders, back, arms, and hands. Let your hips and legs sink into the support, let your ankles and feet relax and release into your sitting surface.
- 2** • Notice your breathing. Notice the natural rhythm of your breathing.  
• Inhale...Exhale...  
• Think, "Quiet shoulders, quiet chest."  
• Let your stomach rise with your inhale, fall with your exhale.
- 3** • Now notice your stomach and buttock muscles. Soften and relax these muscles.  
• Now think of the hammock of pelvic floor muscles that run from the pubic bone to the tailbone. Maintain your breathing rhythm and gently tighten this hammock of muscle, gently lift up and in to tighten, then release, gently and easily. Try again, tighten and release, maintaining your breathing, keeping your stomach and buttocks relaxed. Do 3–4 of these gentle contractions.
- 4** • Practice this exercise for short periods 2–3 times a day, until it feels easy to tighten the pelvic muscles gently while keeping the buttocks and stomach muscles quiet and maintaining your normal breathing rhythm.

### WHAT TO DO WHEN AN URGE HITS

When an urge to urinate hits, when the key is in the door and you don't think you can make it to the bathroom, what do you do?

- 1. Stand quietly with relaxed posture.**
- 2. Breathe "slow and low"** (belly breath), 3-4 breaths.
- 3. Tighten the pelvic muscles** 4-5 times in quick contractions.
- 4. Visualize a quiet and peaceful place.**
- 5. Continue to the bathroom after the urge has quieted.** If it has been less than 2–3 hours try to delay going to the bathroom, otherwise continue on your path towards the toilet stopping as many times as you need to control the urge.

