

It's very important that you see your GP if you experience any of these problems. If you notice any blood in your urine, or if you feel pain while passing urine, see your GP promptly.

You can self-refer to Bromley Healthcare's **Bladder and Bowel Service** via telephone on 0300 330 5777.

Alcohol

The UK Chief Medical Officers recommend adults do not regularly drink more than 14 units per week - this applies to men and women.

14 units could be represented by:

6 pints of beer or lager at 4%, or 6 glasses of 13% wine (175 ml glasses) or 14 glasses of 40% spirits (25ml per glass).

If you regularly drink 14 units per week it is best to spread your drinking over 3 or more days.

Older people are more sensitive to the effects of alcohol and health problems can make us more susceptible to alcohol. Our balance gets worse with age so even a small amount of alcohol can make you more unsteady and more likely to fall.

Alcohol can add to the effect of some medication e.g. painkillers or sleeping tablets, and can reduce the effect of others e.g. medication to thin the blood (Warfarin).

If you think you have an alcohol problem talk to your doctor. There are also a number of organisations offering free advice, such as **Alcoholics Anonymous'** national helpline: 0800 917 7650

If you have any concerns about hydration or continence please speak to one of the team, as we may be able to help you find a solution.

**Bromley
Healthcare**
community first

Falls Prevention service

**St Paul's Cray Clinic
Mickleham Road
Orpington BR5 2RJ**

Tel: 0300 330 5777

Email:

bromh.ucrtherapiesadmin@nhs.net

Tell us what you think

We want you to be happy with the service you receive from us, but we know that every so often something might go wrong. If you're unhappy with the care you receive or an element of our service, we want to hear from you.

Of course, we also want to hear from you if you're happy with the care you're receiving - it's good to be able to thank the team and let people know they're doing a good job, so if you have a compliment or congratulation, we'd like to hear from you.

If we are unable to resolve your concerns or you would like to take the matter further please contact us at the address below.

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1b Knoll Rise
Orpington BR6 0JA

020 8315 8880

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bromleyhealthcare.org.uk

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Hydration and Continence

Falls Prevention service

Water is essential for life - it is vital to get the right amount of fluid to be healthy.

Role of fluids

Depending on a person's size, the human body can be between 45% and 75% water.

Fluids are needed by the body to:

- Produce saliva so we can swallow
- Cushion our joints
- Lubricate our eyes
- For chemical reactions within our bodies
- To excrete waste products thorough urine
- Regulate body temperature through sweat

Dehydration

The first indication of dehydration can be thirst and dark coloured urine. Though it should be noted that colour of urine is not a reliable indicator for older people or those with kidney problems.

Other symptoms may include:

- Dizziness or light-headedness
- Headache
- Tiredness
- Poor concentration; mental performance decreases progressively as dehydration worsens
- Kidney and gallstones
- Difficulty managing bloods sugar levels if person has diabetes
- Dry mouth, lips and eyes
- Bladder irritation, passing small amounts of urine frequently

Dehydration increases the risk of falls

How much fluid do we need?

The Eatwell Guide suggests adults drink 6-8 glasses of fluid per day.

Older people require similar amounts of fluids as other adults; however they are more at risk of dehydration due to the ageing process:

Thirst recognition – The ability to feel thirst can be diminished and in cases where a person has dementia they may not be able to recognise it.

Kidneys – As we get older kidney function can reduce. As a result the body loses the ability to concentrate urine meaning more water is lost.

Skin – Thinner skin can result in increased water loss through skin, especially when in a dry environment such as a hospital ward.

Bladder problems

A normal bladder:

- empties four to seven times each day (every three to four hours)
- can hold up to a pint of urine (between 400ml and 600ml), but usually feels quite full at about half this amount
- may wake you up once or twice a night to pass water
- tells you when it's full but gives you enough time to find a toilet
- empties completely each time you pass urine
- does not leak urine.

The following are the most common bladder problems:

Urinary tract infections

Urinary tract infections (UTIs), such as cystitis, can cause temporary bladder problems, such as the urgent need to pass urine, or a burning sensation when you go to the toilet. They can be painful and uncomfortable but the symptoms should clear up after a few days. If they don't disappear after five days, see your GP.

Stress incontinence

This is when you let out urine when you cough, sneeze, laugh or exercise. Even gentle exercise, such as walking, can cause leakage if you have stress incontinence. It's more common in woman and is caused by a weak bladder outlet and weak pelvic floor muscles that support it. We can provide you with exercises recommended to help with this problem.

Urge incontinence

This is often caused by an overactive bladder. The main symptom is a sudden, urgent need to pass urine, and not being able to reach the toilet in time. You may also need to pass urine more often than usual. It may be sensible to have a commode or bottle in the bedroom rather than rushing to get to the toilet on time which increases the risk of falling.

Nocturia

If you're frequently getting up more than twice during the night and it's disturbing your sleep, making you tired in the day and affecting your daily activities, speak to your GP or district nurse.

Overflow incontinence

If you have overflow incontinence, you may have difficulty starting to pass urine and feel that your bladder does not empty completely. The stream may also be slower than before.