

## Bladder care

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After birth, it is important to try and pass urine **within four to six hours** to avoid urinary infections or the bladder becoming over-full. Good hydration following birth and whilst breastfeeding is important, and it is recommended that women drink at least two to three litres of water/ fluids a day.

After birth, some women find that their bladder function is not as efficient and can experience:

- **urinary retention** (when the urge to pass urine is absent or isn't as strong – this leads to the bladder over-filling. This overstretching can cause long term damage to the bladder).
- **stress urinary incontinence** (when urine leaks on sneezing or coughing or exercising).
- **urgency urinary incontinence** (when you suddenly need to pass urine with no prior sensation to do so – leading to leaking of urine).

Pelvic floor exercises can help improve bladder function (**see page 18**), however if you are worried about your urinary control, or any symptoms of bladder dysfunction persist it's important to speak to your midwife, health visitor or GP.

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For more information visit:

- **The National Childbirth Trust:**  
[www.nct.org.uk/parenting/incontinence-pregnancy-and-after-childbirth](http://www.nct.org.uk/parenting/incontinence-pregnancy-and-after-childbirth)

