



# OAB Answers

Overactive bladder (OAB) is a common medical condition. However, it is often a difficult topic to talk about and many people prefer to keep it to themselves and just cope with their symptoms. You don't have to remain silent. Talk to your healthcare provider. This guide can help answer some questions you may have about OAB.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Q. What is OAB?**

OAB is a medical condition that can happen when the muscles in your bladder are too active. Your bladder muscles contract to pass urine before they should. These contractions cause the sudden, strong urge to urinate.

### **Q. What are the symptoms of OAB?**

**Leakage:** Leaking is also known as “accidentally urinating” after a sudden, uncontrollable urge.

**Urgency:** Urgency is when you feel a strong need to urinate that is difficult to control. The stronger the urge, the greater chance you may have of leaking.

**Frequency:** Frequency means that you need to urinate too often. If you urinate 8 or more times in a 24-hour period, that could be a sign that you may have urinary frequency.

### **Q. Is OAB common?**

Yes. Millions of people in the United States live with OAB symptoms. Approximately 1 in 3 adults 40 years of age and older reported symptoms of OAB at least “sometimes.”

### **Q. Who does OAB affect?**

OAB affects both men and women. OAB symptoms of urgency, frequency, and leakage are not normal at any age. They may occur more often as people get older, but that doesn't mean they are a normal part of aging. The chances of experiencing OAB increase when a woman goes through menopause. The same is true for men who have had prostate problems. Other conditions can increase the risk of OAB, such as diseases that affect the brain or nervous system.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS *(continued)*

### **Q. Can diet affect OAB?**

Your bladder may be sensitive to certain food or drinks. Consumption of caffeine, alcohol, and spicy or acidic foods may worsen your OAB symptoms.

### **Q. What is the cause of OAB?**

Nerve signals between your brain and bladder control when you have to urinate. Sometimes these nerve signals send the message to empty the bladder before it is full.

OAB can also happen when the muscles that control your bladder contract at the wrong time. This is often associated with the sudden, strong urge to urinate.

### **Q. How do I find out if I have OAB?**

Only a healthcare professional can diagnose OAB. If you think you have OAB, speak to your doctor. He or she will start by asking you a few questions about your symptoms and medical history.

When you provide answers, try to be as detailed as possible. Discuss how long you've experienced your symptoms, their intensity, and how frequently they occur. Your doctor may suggest you track your symptoms in a bladder diary.

Your doctor may also perform a physical examination. The urinary system is complex, so your doctor may need to examine your abdomen, pelvis, rectum, or prostate. You may also be asked to provide a urine or blood sample to rule out other conditions.

### **Q. How is OAB treated?**

Your healthcare provider will help determine the treatment plan for you. The first step in treating OAB is typically to make changes in your lifestyle. This could mean changes in what you eat or drink. You may try removing one or more things from your diet to determine if they are making your symptoms worse. Other lifestyle changes may include scheduled bathroom breaks or pelvic exercises. Both of these are intended to help "train" your bladder.

Your healthcare provider may suggest a treatment plan for you that may include taking a prescription medicine for OAB. You should follow the prescription instructions exactly as they are written. It is also important that you ask your healthcare provider about what you can expect from this medicine.

**What questions do you have about OAB?**  
Be sure to discuss them with your healthcare provider.