

My Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Bladder



Yes! A vacation at the beach, I cannot wait to get my tan on and read my book. Oh, it's a 2 and a half hour drive? That's not so bad... oh, you hate stopping along the way unless it's absolutely necessary? Sure, I think I can handle... excuse me, I need to run to the restroom.

Does this sound familiar? I think I spend more time sprinting to the nearest bathroom to urgently pee than anything else. I walk into a restaurant and immediately begin mapping out a path to the nearest bathroom. I cannot even begin to tell you how many coffee mugs have been sacrificed on long car rides because I couldn't find a bathroom and had no other options. Can you count how many accidents you've had in your adult life on one hand? I couldn't even give you a ballpark number of how many pairs of pants I've ruined because of my angry, overactive bladder.

My bladder and I used to be friends; I was the reigning champ of holding it until the car ride was over, and never had to inconvenience anyone with my frequent need. Since my diagnosis, my bladder is no longer my friend—friends **talk**. My bladder keeps secrets until it's **happening**. It would be manageable if I just had to pee all the time; I have to pee all the time **and** it's urgent. Beyond urgent. Like, I have to pee and as soon as I do, I have to pee **now**.

Have you ever canceled plans because of your MS? We've all been there, but have you had to cancel plans because you knew there'd be limited places to use to the bathroom? I have, and

it might be the worst feeling in the world (I'm exaggerating, but it is unfortunate!). When you have an overactive bladder, you start getting creative with where you end up going (rest in peace blender bottles, coffee mugs, random buckets, and other bizarre items I've come across).

Having an overactive bladder is one of the single most common symptoms people with MS experience, and is one of the least talked about things in our community because it's "embarrassing." Well, let me tell ya, after having too many unhappy accidents in my life, I practically shout from the rooftops that I need accommodation. This is a very real issue that I'm sure many of you MS warriors are dealing with every single day but are too afraid to talk about.

My friends, speak up! It's okay to take 100 bathroom breaks in 30 minutes; it's okay to need to choose a table closer to the rest room in the coffee shop; it's okay to have to pee! It's a weird issue we have to deal with, but it's just a part of who we've become. And just remember, if this is something you thought you were dealing with alone, feel confident in knowing that there are others out there who are also peeing excessively and urgently—we're in this together.