

Lifestyle coping strategies



Illustration by PushArt

Use these expert tips, including a few from people with MS who found ways to make their bladder issues easier to manage day to day.

Pack a spare. Stock your car and office with emergency packs. Include clean undies, wipes, an absorbent pad, a pair of pants and a large zippable bag for dirty clothes.

Stay protected. Wear an absorbent pad in case of accidents. Men can try an external collection unit (such as a Texas catheter) for discreet drainage.

Spot the bathrooms. A handful of apps—including Sit or Squat, Where to Wee, Toilet Finder and more—can point you toward the nearest toilet. “I knew where every bathroom was for

every store that I shopped in, because when I had to go, I had to go!” Claire P., of Annapolis, Maryland, says. “When you do have an accident, your day is ruined, both mentally and physically.”

Give yourself time. To prevent a self-flushing toilet in a public restroom from flushing repeatedly while you’re using it, cover the electronic eye with a sheet of wet toilet paper.

Keep it loose. Skip the belt and steer clear of pants with multiple buttons, drawstrings and other complicated closures that could get in the way. Also avoid constricting clothes that could amp up feelings of urgency.

Try camouflage. To conceal minor accidents that don’t require a wardrobe change, choose dark-colored or patterned clothing and wear long, lightweight jackets or cardigans whenever possible.

Dress your bed. If nighttime wetting is an issue, add a waterproof liner beneath your sheets to make clean-ups quicker. You might also consider putting a portable commode near the bed for easy access—and keep a flashlight at bedside so you can find your way!

Rally support. If you’re comfortable sharing your issue with family and close friends, they can be a source of support—and even comic relief—at times when you need cover for a quick exit or to borrow a fresh pair of underwear. “Far from driving a wedge between you, sharing this intimate information may bring you closer,” Rosalind Kalb, PhD, of the National MS Society says, “not to mention making it easier to manage your symptoms.”

Go back to featured story, [“Yes, you can regain bladder control.”](#)