
information for teenagers with bladder and bowel issues

It is not uncommon for people to worry about trips away from home, even if they are looking forward to a holiday or spending time with friends. There can be a lot to think about, planning, packing and so on, while continuing other everyday activities of life.

For teenagers with bladder or bowel issues there may be additional worries about managing toileting anywhere that is away from home. Bladder & Bowel UK also have information to help you [manage at school or college](#).

Starting to think about what you will need early may make managing your bladder and/or bowel issues easier.

Preparing for time away from home

The preparations you might want to make before leaving home, will depend on how long you are going to be away for, how well you know the place you are going, how you are going to get there and how your bladder and/or bowel issues affect you.

These hints and tips should be able to help you with short trips to the shops as well as overnight visits to friends or family and longer trips such as holidays.

- There are apps that can help you find public toilets, such as [Toilets UK](#) or [Flush Toilet](#) Finder. There are online maps such as [Toilet Map](#) and there is information about [Changing Places](#) toilets for those who need full size changing tables and hoists. There are also apps for to help you find toilets in other countries.
- Travel hubs such as railway stations and airports usually have information about their facilities on their websites.
- Bladder & Bowel UK can send you a free [Just Can't Wait card](#). Many businesses will allow people with these cards to use their toilets, even if you are not using their services, or they don't have public toilets.
- If you have a disability or medical need you could purchase a RADAR key. These keys allow access to locked disabled toilets in the community. They usually have more space and a sink in the cubicle.
- Take a small bag with any supplies you might need with you. This might include wipes, changes of underwear, clothes or spare pads (disposable or washable continence products) if you need these. You could keep the small bag inside a larger handbag or backpack.

- You might find a portable urinal helpful. These are available for males and females, are light and easy to carry. You could use them discretely under clothing or a small blanket and empty it when you can next get to a toilet.
- Plan regular drinks and trips to the toilet. Try to avoid reducing your fluid intake as this will make your wee more concentrated, which can irritate the bladder and make wetting worse. Not drinking enough can also cause or worsen constipation.
- Consider wearing clothes that are easy to remove quickly, in case you need the toilet in a hurry.
- Dark clothes are better at concealing leaks.
- Carry a bottle of water or other drink. If you have an accident, you can pretend you have spilt this onto your clothes.

Staying away from home overnight

If you are staying away with school, college or a group, consider telling the group leader about your needs. They may be able to arrange for you to sleep in a smaller room, or in a room close to the toilets.

You could consider using washable or disposable pads or pants for the journey or any nights away, if you are worried about possible leaks. These could be kept discretely in your washbag and then tied up in a plastic bag or nappy bag for disposal. Or you may prefer to use washable underwear, sleeping bag liners or sheet covers. There is information about different types of pads available on [Continence Product Advisor](#) website.

If you take medication, make sure you have it with you. You may need to give this to a teacher or adult group leader for the duration of a trip with school or college. If you are allowed to keep your own medication, you may want to set an alarm on your phone to remind you to take it.

Travelling

You or your family/carer or group leader (if going on a school, college or group trip) could contact the travel company or airline before you travel, to discuss your needs. You could ask if any luggage or body searches could be done somewhere private. Think about what you might need during the journey, such as pads, catheters or stoma bags (if you use these). Make sure that you carry these and any spares with you.

Holidays and trips away from home

There are more hints about travelling in the Bladder & Bowel UK blog [Travelling with a continence problem](#).

It is up to you whether you tell anyone about your bladder and/or bowel issue.

However, you may want to think about what you might want to say if anyone does ask you any questions.

Your doctor or nurse may have some other suggestions for things that might help you manage your bladder or bowel condition when away from home.

Further information

Find more information about bladder and bowel health in our information library at www.bbuk.org.uk. You can also contact the [Bladder & Bowel UK confidential helpline \(0161 214 4591\)](#).

For further advice on bladder and bowel problems speak to your GP or other healthcare professional.