

BLADDER IRRITANTS

Bladder irritants are foods, beverages, and other products that affect your bladder. They may irritate the bladder muscle and cause it to contract, which can lead to a strong need to urinate (urgency) and add to any difficulties that you may have with incontinence.

Try to limit items that you consume regularly for a few days to see if there is any improvement in your bladder function.

Bladder irritants include:

Acidic Juices and Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Lime▪ Lemon▪ Grapefruit▪ Orange▪ Pineapple
Spicy Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Mexican▪ Thai▪ Indian▪ Cajun
Tomato Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Juices▪ Sauces▪ Fresh and canned tomatoes
Alcohol	Alcohol acts like a diuretic. It creates a large amount of urine quickly, irritates your bladder, and also weakens pelvic muscle tone.
Caffeinated Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Coffee▪ Tea▪ Colas▪ Chocolate
Other Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sugar▪ Honey▪ Corn syrup▪ Artificial sweeteners▪ Carbonated beverages <p>All of these can be culprits if consumed regularly.</p>

Smoking and certain medications also irritate the bladder.

Smoking

- The ingredients in cigarettes are extremely irritating to the bladder wall. They cause frequency (urinating often), urgency (strong urge to urinate), and increase your risk of developing bladder cancer.
- Coughing from smoking causes the abdominal muscles to put pressure on the bladder and pelvic floor muscles, which leads to the weakening of these muscles. Weak bladder and pelvic floor muscles may lead to incontinence.

Medications

- Prescription, over-the-counter, and herbal or natural medications may affect your bladder. Check with your doctor or pharmacist to see if anything you take may be prompting your bladder problems.
- Many medications contain caffeine or other bladder irritating substances.
- Talk to your doctor if you take antihypertensives (blood pressure pills), diuretics (fluid/water pills), antipsychotics or antidepressants, or cough and cold preparations that may be influencing your bladder problems.

Caffeine is one of the biggest culprits when it comes to bladder irritation. The following are some of the average caffeine contents in common beverages and foods.

Food or Beverage	Approximate Caffeine Content (per serving)
Coffee (8 oz)	
▪ Brewed	135 mg
▪ Instant	95 mg
▪ Flavored mixes	30-65 mg
▪ Decaffeinated	5 mg
Tea (8 oz)	
▪ Leaf or bag (brewed 5 minutes)	50 mg
▪ Bottled iced teas (12 oz can)	35-60 mg
▪ Iced tea mixes	20-40 mg
▪ Green tea	40 mg
Soft Drinks (12 oz)	
▪ Colas	35-50 mg
▪ Jolt cola	71 mg
▪ Diet colas	45 mg
▪ Sunkist orange soda	42 mg
▪ 7-up, Sprite, Ginger Ale, Root Beer	0 mg
▪ Caffeine-free soda	0 mg
Chocolate and Candies	
▪ Baking chocolate (1 oz)	35 mg
▪ Hershey's dark chocolate (1.5 oz bar)	31 mg
▪ Hershey's milk chocolate (1.5 oz bar)	10 mg
▪ Coffee Nips (2 candies)	6 mg
▪ Cocoa or hot chocolate drink (8 oz)	5 mg