

# My multiple sclerosis and **my bladder**

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Do you know  
how MS can  
affect your  
bladder?

Laura  
Living with MS



Michael  
Living with MS



# Why might my MS affect my bladder?

MS can damage the nerves that send signals between the brain and the bladder.<sup>2</sup> If this happens, your bladder function may be affected.<sup>3</sup>

## How may my bladder act if affected by MS?

- You may need to visit the bathroom frequently or sometimes leak urine.
- You may experience hesitancy or have an interrupted stream when passing urine.
- You may find your bladder is not fully empty – even after using the toilet.
- You may experience a weak urine flow.



## Why does this matter?

Recognising your bladder issues and seeking support can help improve your quality of life.



Bladder issues may also increase the risk of contracting a urinary tract infection (UTI).<sup>2</sup>

Did you know that 3 out of 4 people living with MS will **experience continence issues** at some point in time?<sup>1</sup>

Sarah finally linked her bladder issues to her MS at a workshop where they showed the affect it can have on the body.



*“One nurse had a sports bottle filled with water, representing the bladder. She squeezed it and water came out uncontrollably. Then she let go and it stopped, but water was still inside. At that moment, I thought ‘That’s what’s happening to me’. And I realised my MS and bladder issues were linked.”*

Sarah | Living with MS

# What is the bladder?

The bladder is a part of the body's urinary system. Urine is made in the kidneys and transferred to the bladder via two tubes (the ureters). This hollow, elastic organ expands to store the urine, then contracts and flattens to push urine out of the body via the urethra when appropriate.

## Bladder states



+ Relaxed bladder  
+ Closed sphincters  
= **Bladder filling up**



+ Contracting bladder  
+ Open sphincters  
= **Bladder emptying**

## How is my urinary system connected?

The urinary system is controlled by a network of nerves that connect to the brain via the spinal column.

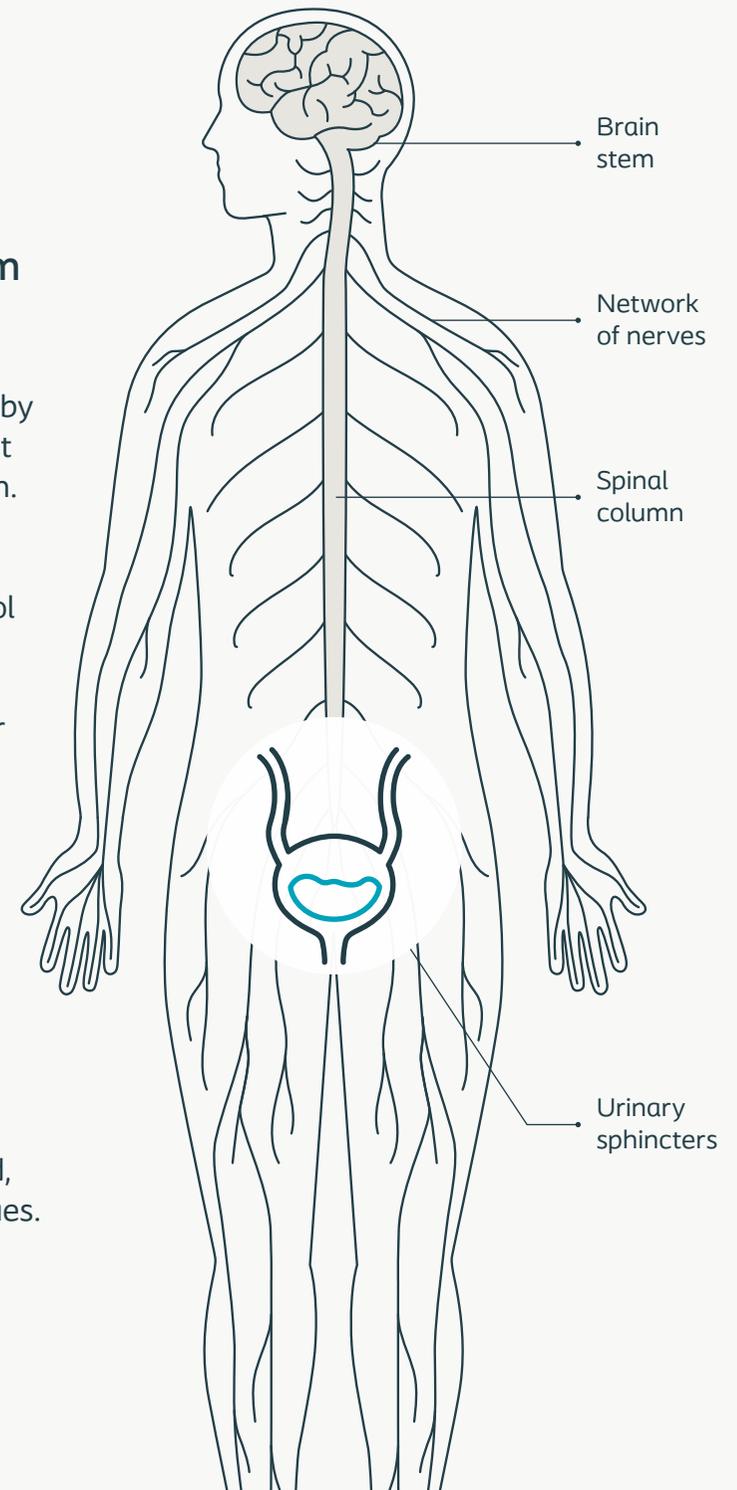
This allows your brain stem and central nervous system to control your bladder.

Nerves control when the bladder pushes urine out via the urethra.

Urinary sphincters act as valves to keep the urethra closed until it is time to urinate.

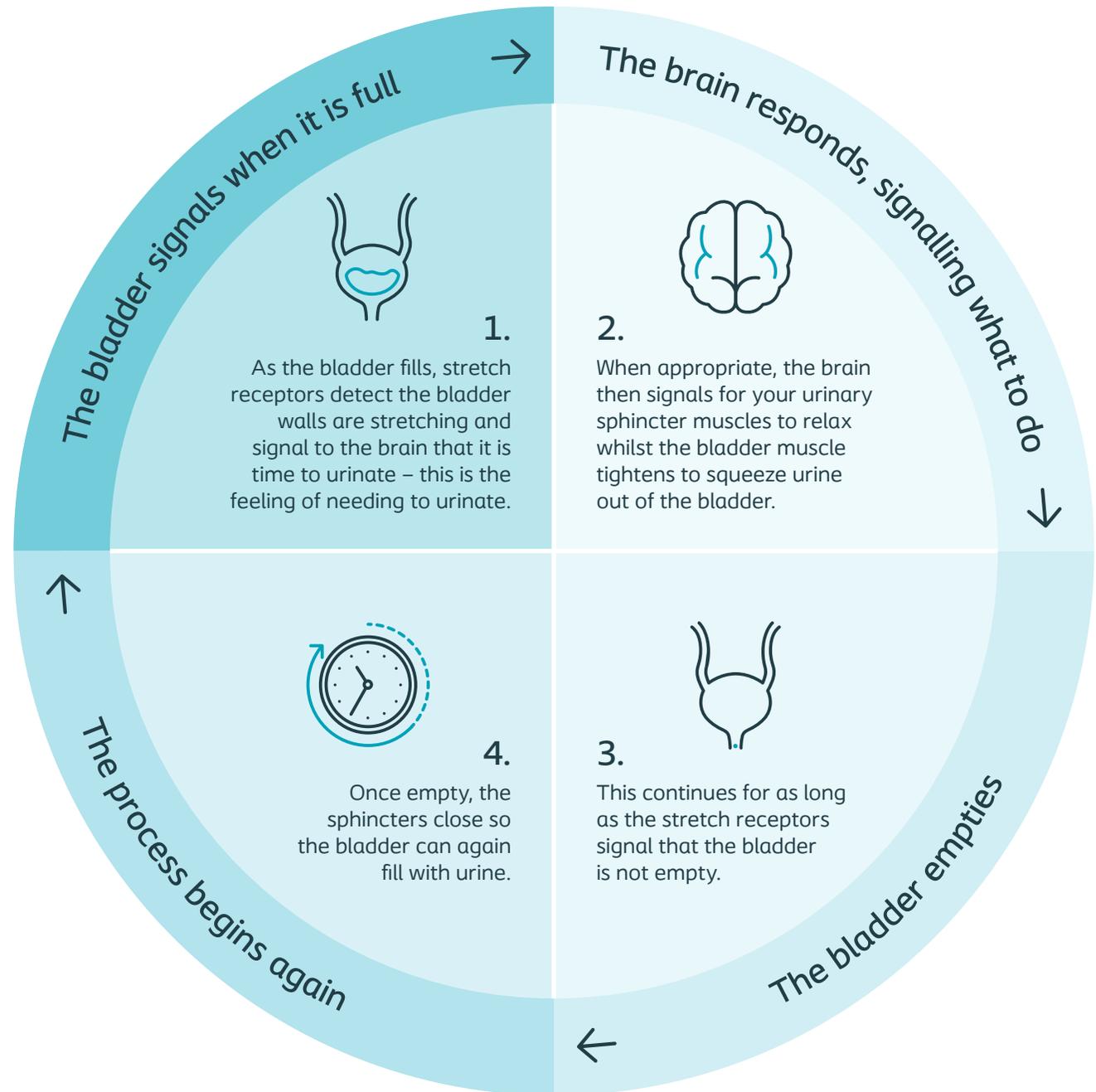
Nerves control when these sphincters should open or close.

If your sphincters and bladder contractions are not coordinated, you may experience bladder issues.



# How does the bladder function normally?

Signals between the bladder and brain play a crucial role in urination. This communication between the bladder and brain is what enables you to maintain urinary control and choose when and where you urinate.<sup>4</sup>



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Bladder issues may arise if MS interferes with the communication between your bladder and brain.

# Where can I get help?

If you are concerned that your MS is affecting your bladder, always reach out to a healthcare professional for medical advice.

Here at Coloplast, we know that living with MS can often present bladder challenges, and it is hard to get the specific information you really need.

[www.coloplast.com/MS](http://www.coloplast.com/MS)

## How can Coloplast Care support me?



Coloplast Care is a free support programme designed to help you manage your continence issues when living with MS. It provides educational information and practical support through phone, email, and online materials.

Contact us today by calling **XXX** or reach out via **XXX**.



Sign up to Coloplast Care to receive our personalised support



*"Our bodies are so good at adapting, I didn't notice there were any bladder problems. For me, it was completely normal to go to the toilet every half hour."*

Kristoffer | Living with MS

1. Uccelli M M. MS in focus. Multiple sclerosis international federation; July 2014.
2. Phé V, Chartier-Kastler E, Panicker J N. Management of neurogenic bladder in patients with multiple sclerosis. Nature Reviews. Urology. 2016;13(5):275-288.
3. Kalsi V, Fowler C J. Therapy Insight: bladder dysfunction associated with multiple sclerosis. Nature Clinical Practice. Urology. 2005;2(10):492-501.
4. Holland N J. Urinary Dysfunction and MS. National Multiple Sclerosis Society; 2016.