

### **Classic Bladder Irritants**

- Alcohol: liquor, wine, wine coolers, beer
- Caffeine: coffee, tea, dark sodas, some darker herb teas (including decaffeinated versions of all of these), chocolate, many cough medications, and other over-the-counter medications (check the labels)
- Very acidic fruit or fruit juices: orange, grapefruit, lemon, lime, mango, and pineapple
- Tomatoes: tomato juice, red spaghetti sauce, pizza, barbecue sauce, and chili
- Spicy foods: Mexican, Thai, Cajun, Indian, “southwest” cooking
- Milk Products: milk, cheese, cottage cheese, yogurt, and ice cream
- Sugar: corn sweeteners, honey, fructose, sucrose, lactose (these ingredients are added to many packaged foods)
- Artificial sweetness: especially nutrasweet or aspartame

You might try eliminating these items from your diet for a few weeks to see if you improve. Keep a food diary and a voiding diary for several days to see if there is a pattern to your incontinence. Compare the two charts to see if you have more frequent episodes of incontinence at a certain time of day, i.e., after having two or three cups of coffee or after taking a morning diuretic. Or, is incontinence worse after having a soda and cookies in the afternoon? If you can't see any distinct pattern, take your food diary and voiding chart to a nutritionist, nurse, or physician and ask if they can see things you might avoid.

These are suitable substitutes for many of the above items: warm broth (watch the salt content of packaged varieties), herb tea or cereal beverages instead of coffee, white chocolate instead of regular chocolate.

\*From the Emory Continence Center, Atlanta, Georgia