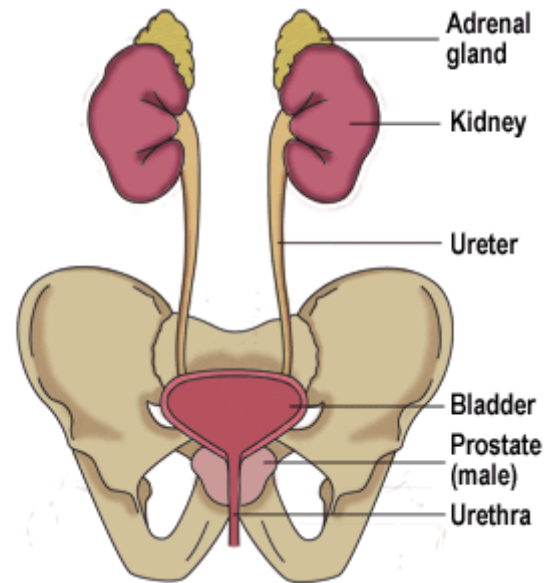


Normal Bladder Function

The two kidneys remove waste products from the body by filtering the blood. Urine is produced as a result. Normal urine is straw coloured and smells of ammonia.

The bladder is a muscular organ which stores urine until it is convenient to pass it. It has the ability to expand and contract as needed.

Passing urine is a complex skill that is learnt. Nerve endings (stretch receptors) in the bladder wall convey messages via the spinal cord to the brain that the bladder is ready to empty. This information is processed in the brain in the micturition centre. If it is convenient a message is then sent back to the bladder to relax the bladder opening (the sphincter). If it is not convenient a message is sent back to the bladder to maintain contraction in the bladder opening and for the bladder muscle to remain relaxed and able to distend further.



Normal Bowel Function

Food enters the mouth where it is chewed. This process aids digestion and also initiates a movement throughout the intestine towards the rectum. From the mouth, food passes to the stomach and then to the small intestine where the nutrients are removed and used by the body. Waste products and water enter the large bowel where the matter is formed into a soft mass called a stool ready to be passed. The rectum is the last section of the large bowel. It is here the process of passing the stool is managed.

The rectum has numerous nerve endings and is able to distinguish between solid, liquid and gas enabling an individual to pass the stool at a socially acceptable time and place. The rectum is not a storage organ and should be empty of faeces apart from when a stool is being passed.