



Continence Issues

Inability to properly control the passing of urine and /or faeces

Incontinence

Incontinence is a symptom, not a disease, and can have many causes. Common causes include bladder infection, temporary illness, diseases affecting the nervous system, conditions such as asthma, diabetes or arthritis, irritable bowel syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease, weakness in pelvic floor muscles and childbirth.

There are different types of urinary incontinence; ranging from the occasional leak when you laugh or exercise to the complete inability to control your bladder, or the need to urgently and frequently visit the toilet.

Incontinence is a concern for a large portion of our population with 4.8 million Australians having bladder or bowel control problems. At least one in four women and one in ten men will experience a continence problem at some time in their lives.

Signs and Symptoms

- Do you sometimes feel you have not completely emptied your bladder?
- Do you have to rush to use the toilet?
- Are you frequently nervous because you think you might lose control of your bladder or bowel?
- Do you plan your daily routine around where the nearest toilet is?
- Do you wake up twice or more during the night to go to the toilet?
- Do you sometimes leak before you get to the toilet?
- Do you sometimes leak when you lift something heavy or playing sport?
- Do you sometimes leak when you change from a seated or lying position to a standing position?
- Do you strain to empty your bowel?

Continence Issues

The Independent Living Centre provides an impartial information and advisory service to help you choose the right product for you



Managing Incontinence

Most types of incontinence can be treated, and many can be cured. Help is available. The first step is to have a thorough assessment by your doctor and seek professional information and advice from a Continence Advisor. They will help you find solutions to manage everyday life so that you can continue with the activities you enjoy.

Dieticians can also provide advice about suitable food and drink to prevent constipation and maintain adequate fluid intake.

Depending on the type of incontinence, treatment may include:

- Medication
- Bladder training
- Pelvic floor exercises
- Using appropriate products such as pads, catheters, chair and mattress protectors
- Wearing clothing that is easy to unfasten
- Developing a routine for going to the toilet
- Modifying diet

Advice and support

There are many products available that are designed to contain the loss of urine and faeces.

The Independent Living Centre has information on our product database and a limited range of products and equipment on display.

For further information and expert advice, contact:

National Continence Helpline

1800 33 00 66

Continence Advisory Service of WA

9386 9777 or 1800 814 925 (Country Callers)

The Continence Foundation of Australia

www.continence.org.au.

These are free, confidential telephone advisory services staffed by a team of continence nurse advisors who can provide information, education and advice on assessment, treatment options, management and appropriate equipment.

Information is also available regarding the Continence Aids Payment Scheme, which provides financial support to eligible people who have permanent and severe incontinence.

Further information:

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