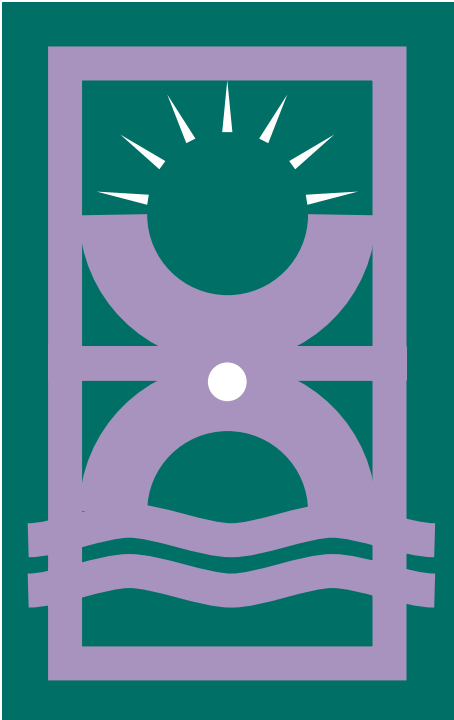




Incontinence Aids and Appliances



What are incontinence aids?

Incontinence aids are products that have been specifically developed to help manage bladder or bowel control problems. The use of incontinence aids can provide a person with security and confidence and raise their quality of life.

They may be used temporarily during treatment or as a long-term solution if the incontinence is irreversible.

The continued use of incontinence aids should be monitored regularly to ensure that the most appropriate products are being used.

What types of incontinence aids are available?

Absorbent pads and pants

These products are designed to absorb urine and contain faecal loss. They are available in a range of sizes and varying levels of absorbency.

Some pads are disposable and designed for one use only. Other pads and parts are reusable - they can be washed and used many times.

To reduce odour and maximise effectiveness, it is recommended that pads are held in place by either firm fitting underwear or specifically designed pants which hold the pad firmly in place.

Absorbent bed sheets and chair covers

Reusable and disposable bed and chair protection is available. These products are constructed so that, if used as recommended, moisture is absorbed into the material layers away from the skin. They can be used to directly absorb the urine loss or provide extra protection when used with other incontinence aids.

Condom drainage and catheters

These products allow for drainage of urine into a collection device such as a leg drainage bag. Your continence advisor will provide the necessary information and advice on the appropriate type and size of product required.

Aids to toileting

These can be used to prevent or minimise episodes of incontinence. The aids to toileting include urinals, bedpans and commodes, and recommended modifications to your living environment such as handrails and raised toilet seats.

What to consider when selecting an incontinence aid

The best product is one that works effectively, is comfortable and assists you in regaining a normal lifestyle. When selecting an incontinence aid, consideration should be given to:



1. The type and severity of incontinence

Your choice of incontinence aids may be determined by the frequency and volume of the urinary and/or faecal loss.

2. Your personal lifestyle

Individual needs with regard to work, home requirements and your normal social activities may affect your choice of incontinence aids.

3. Your mobility, transfers and manual dexterity

Your level of independence to reach the toilet and put on or change incontinence aids may need to be assessed.

4. Availability and supply of products

Some incontinence aids are available locally, eg. supermarkets, chemists, while others may be more easily obtained from specialist medical suppliers.

5. Disposal requirements and facilities

Most disposable products can be disposed of in normal household rubbish. Speak to your local council if you have any concerns. Incontinence aids should NEVER be flushed down the toilet.

6. Washing guidelines

Manufacturers can supply information on the care of reusable products. In most cases, washing guidelines are included on the product or its packaging.

Who pays for incontinence aids?

For those with entitlements, the Department of Veterans' Affairs may accept the responsibility for the costs of incontinence aids.

In some cases, certain products can be obtained free of charge through programs financed by the Government. This includes the Commonwealth Government's Continence Aids Assistance Scheme (CAAS). Most State/Territory Governments also have a program of assistance for incontinence aids.

Advice on eligibility and the types of aids available can be sought from the National Continence Helpline.

Need help in selecting incontinence aids?

Initially, you may find that you have to trial various products. You may need the assistance of a continence advisor in choosing the products that best suit your needs.

The Continence Foundation of Australia can provide you with further information and names of continence advisors in each State and Territory who can help you.

Ask for Help

You are not alone. Incontinence can be cured or better managed if treated.



Who can help?

- Your doctor.
- National Continence Helpline freecall 1800 33 00 66.
(The Helpline can arrange telephone interpreters.)
- Your community or health worker, or physiotherapist.
- Special continence advisers at hospitals, community health centres, continence clinics or at the Continence Foundation of Australia Resource Centres or Branches.

Interpreters. Some services can arrange an interpreter (of the same sex, if preferred), at no cost to you. Check with your service.

Telephone interpreter services are cheaper and often available immediately. For example, the Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS) Doctors Priority Line provides a free service for doctors in private practice to talk with patients with poor English skills. Your doctor can book this service by phoning 1300 131 450.

You can get more information from these other leaflets in this series:

- Urinary Incontinence. What is it?
- Good Bladder Habits for Everyone
- Bladder Training
- Constipation and Urinary Incontinence
- Pelvic Floor Exercises for Men
- Pelvic Floor Exercises for Women
- Dementia and Urinary Incontinence
- Bladder Problems and the Prostate
- Incontinence: Myths and Facts
- What is a Continence Assessment?
- A List of Ten Frequently Asked Questions
- One in three women who ever had a baby wet themselves
- Faecal Incontinence
- Surgery for Stress Incontinence in Women

