

Continence Information

Did you know?

An estimated 3 million people suffer from incontinence in the UK.

Nearly 2 million are women, of whom about one third are younger than 65.

In the majority of cases, incontinence is curable.

There are different types and levels of incontinence. Some of these are listed below with possible causes and treatments:

Stress Incontinence

Slight leakage on laughter, crying, sneezing or exertion.

Possible causes and treatments include

- Oestrogen deficiency - treatment: oestrogen therapy.
- Inadequate pelvic floor muscles - treatment : pelvic floor exercises.

Urge Incontinence

Recognise but cannot control urge, uncontrollable passing of small or large amounts.

Possible causes and treatments include:

Irritation of the bladder due to alcohol, caffeine, reduced fluid intake, infection and certain drug therapies such as diuretics.

Treatment revolves around recognition of the cause of the problem and treatment of that cause e.g. detection and treatment of an infection.

Functional Incontinence

Recognises urge but can't get to the toilet on time.

Possible causes and treatments include:

Disability, arthritis, Parkinson's Disease.

Trea by adapting environment at home to make toilets more accessible.

What can you do?

There are a number of ways to improve continence and prevent incontinence such as:

- Pelvic Floor exercise
- Bladder retraining
- Avoiding constipation
- Ensuring adequate fluid intake

Pelvic Floor Exercises

Practised regularly, can often completely cure stress incontinence and help with combined stress/urge

incontinence. Your Doctor, Physiotherapist or Pharmacist can teach pelvic floor exercises.

Importance of adequate fluid intake

Restriction of fluid intake is not the answer to incontinence and can often aggravate it. We should all drink at least 1-2 litres (8 cups) of fluid daily. Low volume of fluid can:

- Lead to dehydration and confusion
- Decrease effective bladder capacity
- Produce concentrated urine that may irritate the bladder
- Make urinary tract infections worse

Help is at hand

There are many high quality products available designed to help keep people dry and odour free, enabling them to live as near normal life as possible. Both as a short term measure for people who are expected to regain full control, for example while waiting for pelvic floor exercises to take effect as well as more long-term circumstances. Your Pharmacist will be able to advise on which products will best help you and if you wish, advise on the best course of action to take.