



Incontinence and continence care

Information for people living in or visiting the residential aged care facility

Incontinence involves involuntary leakage of urine from the bladder or faeces from the bowel or both.

Incontinence is not a normal part of ageing.

Incontinence is common and can affect people of all ages.

There are many different causes of incontinence.

There are many ways that incontinence can be managed.

What is incontinence

There are different types of urinary (bladder) and faecal (bowel) incontinence so it is important to see your doctor who will work with you and other health professionals to see what type you may have.

Treatment options depend on the type of incontinence you have and what you want to do. There is a range of management options available to you, staff can support and assist.

There are things you can do to help to keep your bladder and bowel healthy.

Treatments for incontinence

The first step is for you and the staff to develop a continence management plan.

This usually involves:

- understanding your type of incontinence
- making sure your fluid intake is enough, about (6 to 8 glasses) each day unless you have a fluid restriction
- increasing the fibre in your diet – including wholegrains and plenty of fruit and vegetables
- doing as much exercise as you can, even if you are in bed (staff can help)
- keeping your pelvic floor muscle strong with pelvic floor exercises



- preventing constipation
- a toileting program – regular toileting
- medications which may be prescribed
- aids such as pads or pants may be included.

Working together

You, your family and friends are important members of the care team. You know what is normal for you.

Let staff know if you notice any changes to your usual toilet habits or if you experience any leakage of urine or faeces. Don't wait to see if you get better – it is always best to get help early.

Working together with staff is important and will initially involve a referral to your general practitioner (GP) for assessment. After this your GP is likely to refer you to a health provider who specialises in continence care and management.

Talk to staff and ask questions. They need your help to give you the best care.

Questions to ask staff

- What type of incontinence do I have?
- Could my medicines be contributing to my incontinence?
Can they be changed?
- What is my continence management plan?
- What can I do to reduce the impact of my incontinence on my daily activities?



Want to know more?

Read about [incontinence and continence problems](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/incontinence-and-continence-problems) on Better Health Channel <<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/incontinence-and-continence-problems>>.

Disclaimer: This health information is for general purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professional to make sure this information is right for you.

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Available from the [Department of Health residential aged care information web page](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/residential-aged-care/participating-with-consumers)

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