Get your continence back

Does bladder leakage stop you doing the things you love, like playing with your children or grandchildren, socialising with friends or exercising?

About 4.8 million Australians experience bladder or bowel control problems every day. Urinary incontinence affects up to 13 per cent of Australian men and 37 per cent of women.

“Bad bladder and bowel problems are much more common than people may think, and can often affect a person’s quality of life,” Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service continence nurse Sheila Nak said.

Experts say bladder leakage, no matter how light, is not normal and most cases can be cured or better managed.

As part of World Continence Week 20 to 26 June, the Continence Foundation of Australia theme is to Improve your bottom line, encouraging people to adopt healthy bladder and bowel habits to prevent and improve incontinence.

“Most problems are a result of developed bad habits, such as smoking, or poor diet or lack of exercise. By addressing the causes and implementing healthy habits incontinence can be improved,” Ms Nak said.

Anyone at any age can develop some form of incontinence. Some health conditions and life events such as pregnancy or obesity can put you at an increased risk of developing either urinary or faecal incontinence.

In 2010, the total financial cost of incontinence was estimated to be $42.9 billion, and incontinence is expected to affect 6.4 million Australians by 2030.

“The good news is, there’s plenty can be done to improve or in some cases cure incontinence. Changes such as adopting a healthier diet and lifestyle and incorporating regular exercise and practicing good toilet habits can all lead to improvements,” Ms Nak said.

For more information, visit the Continence Foundation of Australia - http://www.continence.org.au/

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