

## Help is available

For personal advice and counselling call the *National Continence Helpline* on:

1800 33 00 66

Monday – Friday 8am – 8pm

[www.continence.org.au](http://www.continence.org.au)

Female and male continence nurse advisors provide information free of charge.

They can assist you with continence management and find your closest continence clinician, within Australia.

They can also provide brochures and other resources produced by the *Continence Foundation of Australia* to help you manage your bladder and bowel difficulties.

Useful information may also be found on the *National Continence Program* website:

[www.bladderbowel.gov.au](http://www.bladderbowel.gov.au)



## Further information

*The Home and Community Care (HACC) / Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS) Continence Project team* is committed to improving knowledge and understanding of best practice continence management for service providers and the wider community.

This brochure and other project resources are listed on our website:

[www.health.qld.gov.au/mass/](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/mass/) and available by contacting us on

Phone 07 3136 3665

Fax 07 3136 3666

Email [MASS-ContinenceAids@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:MASS-ContinenceAids@health.qld.gov.au)



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# Did you know

some medical conditions can cause bladder or bowel problems?



It may be embarrassing.  
Don't just put up with it.  
Help is available.





## Do you ever leak urine or faeces, even just a little?

Maybe you leak when you exercise, lift heavy items, sneeze or laugh. Maybe you have trouble getting to the toilet in time, or you might dribble urine after you think you have finished in the toilet. This leakage is called incontinence.

## Some medical conditions may cause incontinence.

Arthritis and conditions affecting mobility can make it hard to get to the toilet in time.

Parkinson's disease, Stroke, Multiple Sclerosis and other conditions affecting the central nervous system may affect the transmission of messages between the bladder, bowel, spinal cord and brain.

Diabetes, respiratory disorders, heart, renal and mental health problems can also affect control over the bladder and bowel.

Dementia and intellectual disability may limit awareness of the social aspects of remaining clean and dry.

For women, pregnancy, childbirth, menopause and prolapse can lead to incontinence and for men, prostate problems.

## Who else has incontinence?

Incontinence can affect men, women, the elderly and the young.

About 1 in 5 Australians have some degree of incontinence.

## Which lifestyle habits impact on bladder and bowel function?

Not drinking enough water, not eating enough fibre, and not exercising enough can cause problems.

Smoking, obesity and consuming too much caffeine or alcohol can add to the problem.

Some drugs and medications affect bladder and bowel function.

## What can be done about the leakage?

Simple things can improve leakage problems:

- drinking enough water
- having adequate dietary fibre
- daily exercise
- sitting on the toilet in a way that helps to empty the bladder and bowel.

Tell your health professional about your incontinence. They can't help unless they know you have a problem.

## Which health professionals can help?

### *Continence nurse advisors*

are registered nurses who specialise in continence assessment and management.

### *General medical practitioners*

identify medical conditions that may cause incontinence. They provide medical management, including referral to other health professionals.

### *Occupational therapists*

provide advice on mobility, safety and suitable aids and equipment.

### *Physiotherapists*

provide advice on mobility, exercise and pelvic floor muscle rehabilitation.

### *Pelvic floor physiotherapists*

focus on bladder, bowel and pelvic floor muscle rehabilitation.

### *Pharmacists*

provide advice on medications, their side effects and interactions with other drugs.

### *Medical specialists*

such as urologists, gastroenterologists and gynaecologists assess and manage continence.

