General Incontinence – Tips & Hints

Incontinence means involuntary leakage of urine or faeces and about four million Australians are affected. Incontinence can occur in men or women of any age but it is more common in older people. In many cases, incontinence can be improved.

**Prevention tips for incontinence:**
- Drinking adequate amounts of fluids
- Developing good toilet habits
- High fibre diet
- Being physically active

**Drinking fluids**
- Drink up to two litres of fluid each day, unless advised otherwise by your doctor. You may need to drink a little more in hot weather or after heavy exercise.
- Don’t guzzle a large drink in one hit – instead, evenly space your drinks throughout the day.
- Limit your daily intake of carbonated drinks, alcohol, tea and coffee because they can cause bladder irritation.

**High fibre diet**
- Eat plenty of wholegrain cereals, fruits and Vegetables; such as wholemeal bread, pasta, brown rice and legumes (peas, peanuts, lentils). Increasing these foods in stools, making them softer and easier to pass.
- Drink up to two litres of fluid per day, because dietary fibre needs water in order to improve stool consistency.

**Regular physical activity**
- A 30-minute walk every day is great for your general health and well-being.
- Keep your pelvic floor muscles in shape – obesity, pregnancy, childbirth, regular heavy lifting and a chronic cough can weaken the pelvic floor, but you can strengthen these muscles with specific exercises.

**Good toilet habits**
- Go to the toilet to urinate only when your bladder is full.
- Go to the toilet when you feel the urge to pass a bowel motion. Hanging on can lead to constipation.
- Give yourself plenty of time to pass a bowel motion.
- Don’t strain to open your bowels.
- Use correct posture on the toilet; it can help you pass a bowel motion.
- Sit with knees higher then hips
- Lean forward and bulge out your abdomen
- Straighten your spine

Please see your doctor if you have any concerns about your toilet habits.