

Getting the Most out of Continence Products

- Are you changing absorbent products unnecessarily? i.e. when only damp, or changing at set times when they may still be dry. Modern products are so efficient they can generally be worn longer, without leaking, odour or discomfort.
- Perhaps you'd benefit by using more than one type or style of pad or pant for different situations, e.g. for overnight, a social occasion, or sport?
- Would lighter, washable absorbent pants or stretchy mesh pants used with a disposable pad be more suitable? They can be more convenient and cheaper than a full disposable pull-up.
- Perhaps a product is the wrong capacity? Too big (so more expensive), or capacity too low, or leakages because of a poor fit. There are some bed pads, too, that are heavy or bulky and hard to wash - they could have a high absorbency factor not needed.
- Do you need to review your product capacity needs? A useful technique is to weigh an absorbent product when it's dry. Then, after each leakage episode, place it in a plastic bag, and weigh before disposal. Recording the readings over 24-hours gives a clearer picture of the incontinence plus required capacity.
- Do you need to improve constipation or diarrhoea? Better management of overall bladder and bowel function could lessen dependence on products. You could choose more suitable and/or use fewer products, plus use the toilet more instead of heavy reliance on products.
- Are you using good skincare products? If skin damage is an issue, avoid products containing harsh alcohol or perfumes that put the skin at risk of damage. Use barrier creams or moisturisers sparingly to keep the absorbency of continence products.
- Are you aware of the many types of continence products now available? Before purchasing products in quantity, check out the range. Obtaining sample products to trial is a good way to ensure suitability.
- Are you eligible for government funding assistance to help with purchase of continence products?
- Talk to a Continence Nurse Advisor who will understand your needs and living circumstances (which may change over time), to assess your incontinence, assess product suitability and help you with better overall management

The National Continence Helpline (1800 33 00 66) is a free and confidential service. Managed for the Australian Government by the Continence Foundation of Australia, there's a great range of resources available. The Helpline's Continence Nurse Advisors can also advise about better managing incontinence, treatment options, products, funding assistance schemes, and details of local continence services.

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