



INCONTINENCE

Bromley

Well

HEALTH FACT SHEET

Updated July 2024

What is Incontinence?

Incontinence is the inability to control either your bowels or bladder which leads to involuntary leaking. There are 2 types of incontinence; urinary incontinence and bowel incontinence, but these conditions can happen simultaneously.

What are the causes of incontinence?

Urinary Incontinence:

- Stress incontinence – when you leak when your bladder is under pressure e.g. when you cough, this is caused by weakening of the muscles that are used to prevent urination.
- Urge incontinence – when you have a sudden, intense urge to urinate due to overactivity in muscles that control the bladder
- Overflow incontinence (chronic urinary retention) – when the bladder does not fully empty during urination and you frequently leak afterwards, normally caused by some sort of obstruction which prevents the bladder emptying.
- Total incontinence – when you pass urine constantly or have frequent leaking due to your bladder being unable to store any urine.

Bowel Incontinence:

- Long lasting constipation or diarrhoea
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) or inflammatory Bowel Disease e.g Crohn's disease
- Haemorrhoids
- Childbirth or surgery that has damaged muscles or nerves that control your bowels
- Conditions such as diabetes, stroke or spina bifida.

What about treatment?

Some treatment options include:

- Reducing caffeine and alcohol intake.
- Pelvic floor exercises – sometimes aided by electrical stimulation.
- Bladder training – learning ways to wait longer between needing to urinate and passing urine.
- Exercising and healthy eating.
- Incontinence products.
- Identifying food that make diarrhoea worse and avoiding them or dietary changes such as increasing high fibre foods if you are constipated and reducing high fibre foods if you are experiencing diarrhoea.
- Medicine to reduce constipation or diarrhoea such as loperamide or laxative.
- Having a regular routine of going to the toilet e.g. directly after meals.
- Surgery can be considered if other treatments do not help.

HELPFUL TOOLS

CAN'T WAIT CARDS

Can't wait cards are for those with bladder and bowel concerns that cause an urgent need to use the bathroom. It allows you access to any public toilet.

RADAR KEYS

Radar keys can be used to open any accessible toilet with a lock.

SELF CARE TIPS

TRY PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISES

Strengthening your pelvic floor can help with leaks. You can find guidance on exercises [here](#).

CUT DOWN ON CAFFEINE AND ALCOHOL

Caffeine irritates the bladder exacerbating incontinence and alcohol acts as a diuretic increasing urination.

TREAT CONSTIPATION QUICKLY

Constipation could cause straining which weakens the pelvic floor. Eating plenty of fibre and ensuring you are hydrated can help.

AVOID FOODS THAT IRRITATE THE BLADDER

Spicy and acidic foods can sometimes cause irritation, keep a food diary to monitor patterns.

To register with Bromley Well:
Freephone 0808 278 7898
Or register online:
www.bromleywell.org.uk/refer

Contact Lifestyle Support direct
07985 431484 / 07985 444210
or email
enquiry@bromleywell.org.uk



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FURTHER RESOURCES

<u>Bladder Health UK</u>	This is a charity that offers support, help and information for those struggling with bladder issues including incontinence. This page provides a variety of articles on managing incontinence as well as different products to help.
<u>Bladder and Bowel UK</u> Help Line: 0161 214 4591	Charity that can help with Can't Wait cards. They also have a helpline and other online support.
<u>Bladder and Bowel Community</u>	This charity can also help with Can't Wait cards. They provide information and support and also run online support groups.
<u>Radar Key</u>	The radar key allows access to accessible toilets with NKS (National Key Scheme) locks around the country. You can open the toilets independently as long as you have a radar key which can be purchased through this link.
<u>Bromley Healthcare</u> <u>Bladder and Bowel Service</u>	Service for people who are struggling with or have concerns around incontinence. They offer confidential advice and assessments and can also do home visits.

References: NHS conditions <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/urinary-incontinence/>
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/urinary-incontinence/10-ways-to-stop-leaks/>

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