

WHERE TO GET HELP FOR BLADDER AND BOWEL PROBLEMS

Your nurse can help you find your local continence service. **This information is in the Continence Management Guideline**, available on the St Vincent's intranet.

Continence clinics in the community have specialist doctors, nurses and physiotherapists working together to assess, treat or better manage bladder and bowel control problems. You may be able to get financial help from the government if you need to buy products to manage your continence. This can be organised by your local continence service.

The National Continence Helpline (Tel: 1800 33 00 66) or www.continence.org.au can provide information.

*Nursing staff:
Refer to the **Continence Management Guideline** on St Vincent's intranet for local continence services.*

Inspired
by
You

Continence: Bladder & Bowel Control

Do you need a Continence Check-up?



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INFORMATION FOR IN-PATIENTS

People of all ages can have bladder and bowel control problems. Research shows about 4.6 million Australians or 21% of people living in the community is affected. This is much higher among older people. Many people keep their problem a secret, or think their bladder or bowel trouble is a normal part of getting old. Bladder or bowel leakage is not a normal part of ageing.

Tell your doctor or nurse if you have bladder or bowel trouble when you are admitted to hospital.

Bladder or bowel control problems can affect your life. They can:

- Cause you to stop going out or playing sport
- Make you feel anxious at home, work or when going out
- Make you feel sad, isolated, ashamed or unhealthy
- Cost money to buy products
- Affect your personal relationships
- Lead to falls and breaking bones
- Make you tired if you wake often to go to the toilet at night

Bladder or bowel leakage is not a normal part of ageing. Get it checked out, as it may get worse in the future.

Signs of bladder or bowel problems include:

- Leakage from the bladder or bowel
- Passing urine more than six times during the day or more than once at night
- Constipation
- Rushing to get to the toilet
- Trouble emptying the bladder or bowel
- Wearing protection for leakage
- Planning activities close to public toilets
- Being worried about having 'an accident' when away from home
- Infections in the bladder

Being in hospital can make your problem worse.

Finding it hard to move after an operation, some medicines, and changing what you eat, are some reasons why your bladder or bowel function may change when in hospital. If things do not feel right, tell your doctor or nurse. Some problems need treating while in hospital.

Many people are constipated when in hospital. It is important to avoid this and have it checked out before going home. Tell your doctor or nurse if you have this trouble.

Constipation can make bladder control problems worse. If very bad, it can also cause leakage from the bowel.