

Bladder and bowel problems



Common problems and
how to manage them

Information written with you in mind.

This information guide has been produced with the help of older people, carers and expert peer reviewers.

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What this guide is about

People of all ages can have a problem controlling their bladder or bowel. But as we get older this may become more of an issue and can really impact our day-to-day lives.

It's not always easy to speak about bladder or bowel problems. Many of us don't talk about what we're going through or look for help, often because we don't think anything can be done or because we find it a sensitive topic to discuss. But it isn't something to be embarrassed about and you should speak to your doctor if you're worried.

“Talking to my GP was the first step in sorting the problem.”

Brian, 82



This guide looks at common problems and some of the things you can do to cure, treat or manage them so they don't interfere with your everyday life.

Throughout the guide we use the terms 'pee' and 'poo'. We understand everyone has their own words for them and these might not be for everyone, but we've done some research and these were the most popular.

Where possible, the information given in this guide is applicable across the UK.



This symbol indicates where information differs for Wales and Northern Ireland.

Good to know



Throughout this guide you'll find organisations that can offer further information and advice about your options. Their contact details can be found in the 'Useful organisations' section at the back (pages 37-40).

Contact details for organisations near you can usually be found in the local phone book. If you have difficulty finding them, your local Age UK should be able to help (page 37). In Wales, contact Age Cymru Advice (page 37).

The bladder and the bowel

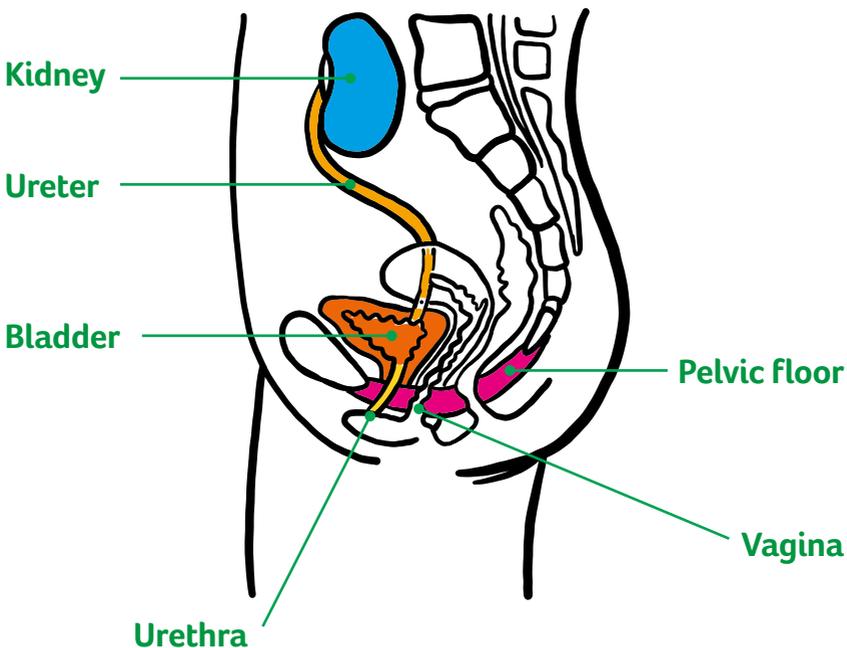
This section outlines how everything works, some of the key terms and some of the more common problems.

How the bladder works

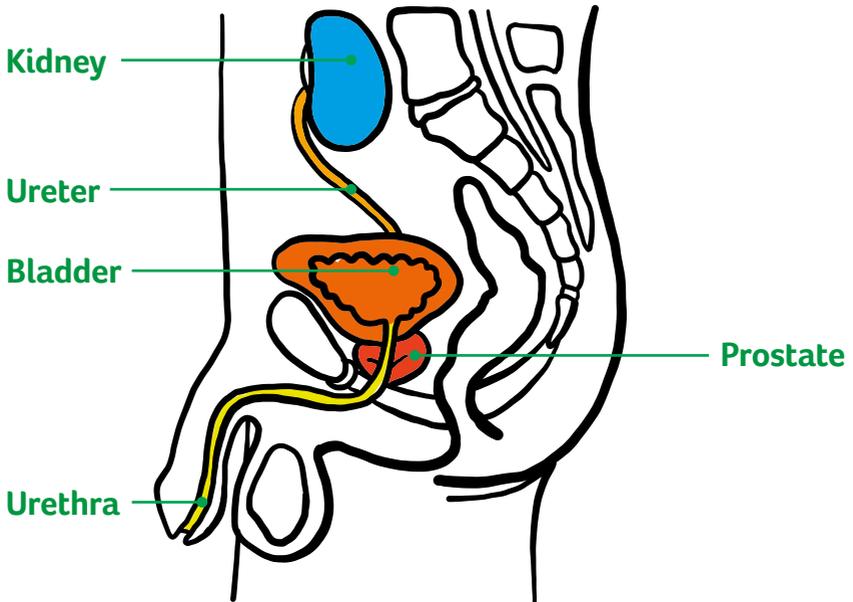
The bladder is a muscular, balloon-shaped bag in the lower part of your body that's supported by pelvic floor muscles. Pee, which is made in the kidneys, passes down the ureter and is stored in the bladder.

When you go to the toilet the bladder contracts, the urethra relaxes, and you pee. Your brain controls your bladder, automatically sending messages telling it when to hold on and when to empty.

The female urinary system



The male urinary system



A normal bladder:

- empties four to seven times each day (every three to four hours)
- can hold up to a pint of urine (between 400ml and 600ml), but usually feels quite full at about half this amount
- may wake you up once at night to pee
- tells you when it's full but gives you time to find a toilet
- empties completely each time you pass pee
- doesn't accidentally leak pee.



Types of bladder problems

Urinary incontinence is a loss of bladder control, which means you sometimes pee unintentionally. It's estimated that more than 3 million people over 65 in the UK experience urinary incontinence, and the condition can be caused by different types of bladder problem.

Urinary tract infections (UTIs)

If you have a UTI, like cystitis, you're likely to have a sudden urge to go to the toilet, go more often or feel a burning sensation when you do go. They can be painful and uncomfortable but symptoms should clear up by themselves after a few days. If they don't, see your doctor.

Nocturia

Nocturia is the need to get up to pee a lot during the night. If you're frequently up more than twice a night and it's disturbing your sleep or making you tired in the daytime, speak to your doctor or district nurse.

Stress incontinence

This is when you pee a little when you cough, sneeze, laugh or exercise – including more gentle exercise such as walking. It's caused by a weak bladder outlet and weakness of the pelvic floor muscles that support it. These muscles can also be strained if you're overweight.

Men may develop stress incontinence after a prostate operation. However, stress incontinence is more common in women because the pelvic floor muscles, which support the bladder, uterus and large bowel, can be stretched and weakened during childbirth. This can lead to a prolapse (when weakened pelvic floor muscles cause these organs to slip). After the menopause, the body stops producing the hormones that help keep the vagina and bladder outlet healthy.

“I was getting up so often in the night I knew it was time to talk to the doctor.”

Anne, 78





Urge incontinence

This is where you need the toilet so suddenly and urgently that it's difficult to get there in time. You may also need to go more often than usual (known as 'increased frequency'), and this may wake you several times at night.

Urge incontinence is often caused by an overactive bladder. Many people find that as they get older, the bladder gives less warning and needs emptying more often. This is normal, until it affects your everyday life or starts to cause incontinence. Then it's time to get help.

The reason for an overactive bladder is often unknown. Sometimes it happens after a stroke and you can be prone to urgency if you have a condition, such as Parkinson's, that affects the nerves linked to the bladder.

It's possible to have a mixture of stress and urge incontinence, called mixed incontinence, where you might experience symptoms of both.

“I started to worry about going out as I find it trickier to go to the loo properly.”

Michael, 69



Urinary retention

This can happen when the bladder doesn't empty completely. Pee builds up and may overflow, often as a frequent, dribbling leak. You may feel your stream is weaker than before, have difficulty starting to pee or feel your bladder doesn't empty completely.

There are a number of reasons the bladder may not empty completely:

- There may be a blockage or obstruction, like an enlarged prostate gland in men.
- If you're severely constipated, your bowel may become overfull and press on your bladder, reducing the amount it can hold or creating a need to pee.
- Surgery to part of your bowel or an injury to your spine may have damaged nerves to your bladder.

Bladder problems in men

In men over 50, bladder problems can be a sign of an underlying prostate problem. If you notice changes, such as a weaker flow of pee, visit your doctor as soon as you can. If you're worried about your risk of prostate cancer, speak to the doctor about your concerns.

If you notice any blood in your pee, or feel pain when you pee, you should also see your doctor as soon as possible.

“My doctor checked there were no prostate issues causing the problem. Better to be safe than sorry.”

John, 61



Next steps

It's very important to see your doctor if you experience any of the problems explained above, to find out the cause and discuss how best to manage them in the long term.

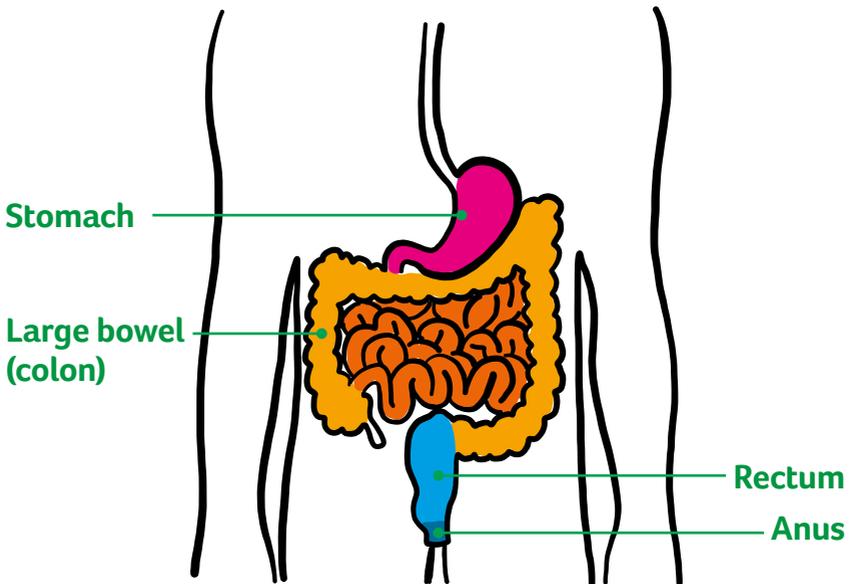
Visit the NHS website (page 39) for more information about spotting bladder problems.

How the bowel works

Food passes from the stomach into the upper part of the bowel. It then passes along the large bowel (also known as the colon), where fluid is absorbed and the remains of undigested food becomes poo. When this arrives in the rectum it creates the feeling we experience when we need to go to the toilet.

A normal poo:

- is soft and easy to pass
- doesn't make you strain
- may come several times a day or only once every two to three days (either can be normal).



Types of bowel problems

Many of us get constipated or have an upset stomach once in a while. However, if any of these problems happen regularly or are starting to affect your daily life, make an appointment to see your doctor.

Constipation

This is a common type of bowel problem and happens when particularly hard poo becomes difficult to pass.

Constipation may be caused by:

- not eating enough fibre (roughage – found in foods such as wholemeal bread and cereals, fruit and vegetables)
- not drinking enough (you should drink at least six to eight cups of liquid a day)
- not moving around much
- certain medicines (such as some painkillers)
- not being able to get to a toilet or putting off going (so the feeling that you need to empty your bowel goes away)
- some neurological diseases, such as Parkinson's
- bowel diseases such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

Diarrhoea

These are frequent, urgent, watery poos that can cause you to have an accident if you can't find the toilet in time. Diarrhoea has many causes, including the overuse of laxatives, a bacterial or viral infection, or having IBS or other bowel diseases.

Bowel incontinence

This is when you can't control your bowel movements, and some poo accidentally leaks out. Some people have this issue every day, others only occasionally. It's usually a symptom of an underlying medical condition that affects the bowel (for example, constipation, diarrhoea, multiple sclerosis, or stroke).

Bowel incontinence can also be caused by muscle weakness or damage to the muscles that control the anus. Some women who experience muscle damage in childbirth can develop control problems later in life.

“I only started to worry about going to the toilet after I had a fall and sometimes I just couldn't get there quick enough.”

Rob, 83



Next steps



Constipation or changes in bowel habits that continue for more than four weeks, or diarrhoea that lasts for more than a few days, should always be reported to your doctor. Report any bleeding to your doctor immediately.

Visit the NHS website (page 39) for more information about bowel problems.

Checking for bowel cancer

Bowel problems can occur in people of all ages and aren't usually a sign of a serious problem. However, bowel cancer is more common in older people and it's important to talk to your doctor if bowel problems continue for more than four weeks. Bowel cancer symptoms can include blood in your poo, changes in your bowel habits and lower abdominal pain, bloating or discomfort.

The NHS offers free bowel screenings between certain ages, based on where you live in the UK.

- In England: offered to 56-year-olds, then offered every two years between the ages of 60 and 74.
- In Wales: offered every two years to people between the ages of 60 and 74, by September 2022 people between the ages of 58 and 74 will be eligible.
- In Northern Ireland: offered every two years to people between the ages of 60 and 74.

Once you're eligible, you should automatically receive a letter with a leaflet explaining the process, then a test kit in the post a week later. This screening test can pick up signs of cancer before you experience any symptoms. Spotting cancer early means it's more likely to be treated successfully.

“I hadn't received my screening kit so I had to ring up. But they did send it out to me.”

Patrick, 68



If you notice anything unusual in your bowel habits before you reach this age, or between screenings, don't ignore it – make an appointment with your doctor.

If you've reached the age of 60 and haven't received a kit, or are 75 or over and would like a screening test, call the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening helpline (see page 39).



In Wales, call Bowel Screening Wales. In Northern Ireland, call the Northern Ireland Cancer Screening Programmes (page 39).

Next steps



Visit the NHS website to find out more about bowel cancer screening, what the tests involve and the benefits and risks, to help you decide if you'd like to get tested and find out what the results mean. In Wales, see the NHS 111 Wales website and in Northern Ireland, visit the Northern Ireland Cancer Screening Programmes website (page 39).

For more information about bowel cancer and early warning signs, visit Bowel Cancer UK's website (page 37).

Audrey assumed urinary incontinence was something she had to put up with.

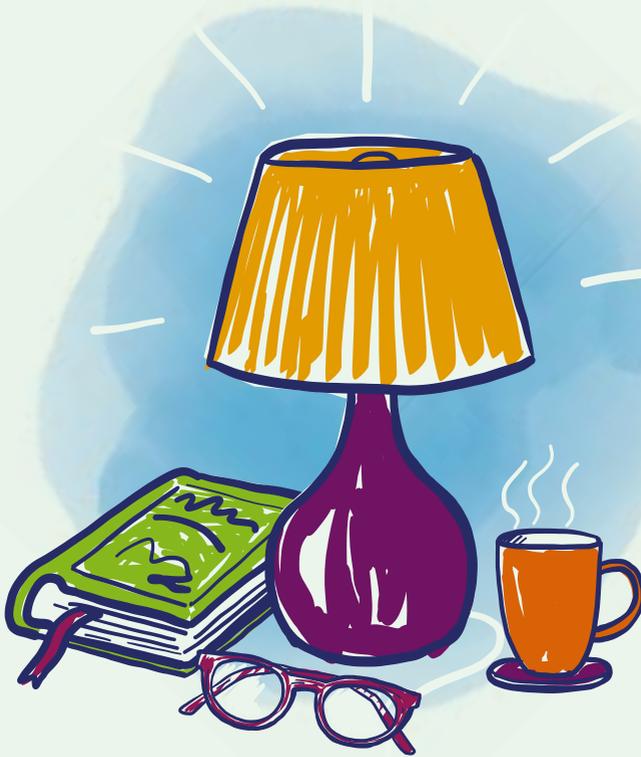
When Audrey started needing to pee without enough warning, she thought it was just an inevitable part of ageing.

‘In my early 60s I started finding it difficult to get to the toilet in time, and I would pee unexpectedly when I coughed or laughed. I love going out for walks with my friends but I had to stop because I never knew when I would need to get to the ladies’ quickly. I bought some incontinence pads so that I could still go out to the shops but I became very self-conscious.

‘I felt too embarrassed to talk to my friends about it and just assumed it was something that you have to put up with when you get to my age. Eventually I plucked up the courage to go to my doctor.

“I only wish I’d known sooner that there was something simple I could do to resolve the problem.”





‘She examined me and said that I had stress incontinence, and that a lot of people my age have the same problem, especially women. She told me that I should try pelvic floor exercises and showed me how to do them. It was tricky at first as you have to make sure you’re exercising the right muscles, but I soon got the hang of it. I did them several times a day, as I was told to, and noticed an improvement after only a few weeks.

‘Now I’m much more confident and I can go out for walks again. I only wish I’d known sooner that there was something simple I could do to resolve the problem.’



Professional help

You may not feel entirely comfortable talking about your bladder or bowel problem. But telling someone – especially a health professional – is the best way to get help.

Getting professional help

Bladder and bowel issues aren't just an inevitable part of getting older. You don't simply have to put up with them – and you certainly shouldn't have to face them alone.

Talk about what you're experiencing with your doctor or the person discharging you from hospital. They will ask questions about your symptoms, possibly examine you and then suggest treatment or exercises to tackle the problem or ways to minimise its effect on your everyday life. If you live in a care home, ask the manager to arrange an appointment with your doctor or the district nurse.

Alternatively, ask your doctor about your local NHS continence service. In some areas you can self-refer, in others you must be referred by a health professional.

Your doctor or continence service may suggest a referral to a hospital specialist, who might want to carry out tests to help diagnose your problem.

What will a health professional need to know?

A health professional may ask you some questions like these to help them understand how your bladder or bowel is working. We've left space for you to make notes here. It's a good idea to keep a diary of your experiences of bladder or bowel problems so you can provide some detail (see page 22). You may also be asked for a sample of your pee, or your bladder may be tested to see how full it gets before the urge to go to the toilet begins.

When did your bladder or bowel problems start?

How often does leaking happen? How much is lost?

How are you dealing with it?

How much, what and when are you drinking?

Can you feel when your bladder or bowel is full?

Have you noticed any other symptoms, such as pain or discomfort?

What medications (including over the counter and herbal) are you taking?

Bladder or bowel diary

When preparing for your appointment, it can also be helpful to keep a bladder or bowel diary for three days. Use the space below to record:

- how much, what and when you're eating and drinking
- how many times you use the toilet each day and night
- when you go to bed and get up in the morning
- how urgent the need was to pee or poo
- incidences of bladder or bowel leaking and what led to them
- any continence products used.

Day 1

Day 2

Day 3

Treatments for bladder and bowel problems

The solutions your doctor or other health professionals suggest will depend on the type of problem you're experiencing. What works will vary from person to person, and sometimes more than one treatment will be needed. Here are some common types of available treatment, in addition to the self-help described on pages 25-32.

Pelvic floor exercises

These could help with stress incontinence and urge incontinence by strengthening the muscles around the bladder or bowel.

A specialist nurse or continence physiotherapist can help you get the hang of these exercises but, if you find them difficult, there's equipment that can help you.

Bladder or bowel training

Bladder training involves learning techniques to hold pee for longer so that you use the toilet less often and gain control of your bladder. These are best for people with urge incontinence.

Bowel training involves establishing a regular time to poo, and stimulating your bowels to empty themselves.

“My doctor gave me pelvic floor exercises to do.”

Diane, 73



Medications

Medication is available for different types of incontinence. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about what medication might help your problem and what, if any, side effects there may be. You can find more information on the NHS website (page 39).

Often, medication is prescribed alongside recommended diet or lifestyle changes.

Surgery

For some people, surgery may be an option if other treatments haven't worked. Your consultant or doctor should talk to you about the benefits and possible risks associated with surgery.

Next steps



Visit the NHS website for more information about incontinence, including treatments. In Wales, visit the NHS 111 Wales website or call the helpline. In Northern Ireland, visit the NI Direct website (page 39).

NICE (the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) produces separate guidance for women and men about what to expect from the NHS if you have bladder problems, and guidance for adults with bowel incontinence. The guidance explains what various tests and procedures involve, and what treatments can be offered (page 40).



Helping yourself

While it's always worth talking about any bladder or bowel problems with your doctor, there are certain things you can do to reduce their impact on your daily life.

Some of these changes are lifestyle changes, while some are things you can do to help yourself when you're out and about.

What can I do to help myself?

- If you're struggling with nocturia – the need to get up more than twice during the night – try drinking less in the few hours before you go to sleep.
- Tea, coffee or fizzy drinks can make your bladder symptoms worse. Cut down on these drinks or try decaffeinated versions. Alcoholic drinks or drinks with artificial sweeteners in them may also cause problems.
- Stopping smoking decreases your risk of bladder cancer, and also reduces coughing, which can put pressure on your pelvic floor muscles.
- Maintain a healthy weight. Being overweight puts pressure on and can weaken your pelvic floor muscles.
- Avoid constipation by eating plenty of fibre-rich foods and making sure you're drinking plenty of liquid.
- Keeping as active and mobile as you can will help keep your bowel healthy. For tips on keeping fit and mobile, see our guide **Healthy living**. Contact your local council or Age UK to find out what activities are available in your area. In Wales, contact your local Age Cymru.
- Ask your pharmacist or doctor whether any medications that you're taking could be disturbing the bladder. For example, water tablets (diuretics) make the bladder fill more often.

Next steps

There is more information about treatments for particular types of bladder and bowel problem on page 23.



Making life easier

You may find your bladder or bowel problems stem from practical issues, rather than medical ones.

For example, if you have walking difficulties you may find it hard to reach the toilet in time. Or if your fingers are stiff, it can be tricky to get clothes out of the way. In these circumstances, incontinence may be a problem if you need the toilet urgently. This is sometimes called ‘functional’ incontinence.

If you’re experiencing these sorts of problems, here are some practical measures you can take that may make things easier.

Improving access to the toilet

If your incontinence is caused by difficulty getting around, a walking aid or stairlift may help you to get to the toilet in time. Grab rails may make it easier to get on and off the toilet. These can be freestanding or wall mounted. Adding a raised seat to the toilet may make it easier to sit down if you have joint problems.

Alternatives to the toilet

If you can't reach the toilet easily, a commode may be useful. These are available in a variety of designs. Many have a lid and look like an ordinary chair. You can also get handheld urinals, for men and women, which can be used in bed or in a chair.

Toilet queues

The Bladder and Bowel Community offers a free 'Just Can't Wait' toilet card, so you don't have to queue if you're out and need to use a toilet quickly. You can order one by calling the Bladder and Bowel Community or visiting their website (page 38). The card states clearly that the holder has a medical condition which means they may need to use the toilet urgently.

You can also get a Radar key, which unlocks disabled public toilets that have been fitted with a National Key Scheme (NKS) lock. These toilets are often found in shopping centres, pubs, cafés and railway stations. Contact Disability Rights UK for more information about Radar keys (page 38).

“I can manage at home, but I'm really worried about going out and about. I don't want to get caught short!”

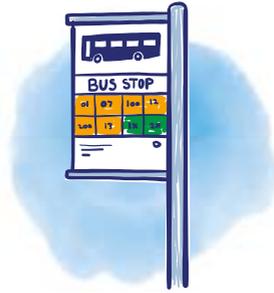
Ray, 77



Next steps



For more advice on special equipment, speak to your district nurse or continence adviser, or contact the Living Made Easy (page 39).



Out and about

Try not to let having a bladder or bowel problem stop you going out. There are practical solutions to problems that might arise and you can take spare pads and pants out with you. Scented bags for soiled pants or pads are useful if you're worried about smell.

Clothing

Stockings might be easier to manage than tights, and full skirts easier to get out of the way than tight ones. Similarly, loose boxer shorts might be easier to manage than Y-fronts. Try clothing with elasticated waists, or adapt clothes so that they fasten with Velcro instead of zips and buttons.

Travel

If you're going on a long journey with family or friends and know you'll need to use the toilet frequently, let them know beforehand. That way, you can plan extra stops so you won't have to worry about accidental leaks.

Next steps



For more ideas to help you, see the '10 ways to stop leaks' section on the NHS website (page 39). In Wales, look up 'incontinence' in the Health A-Z section of the NHS 111 Wales website (page 39)

Continence products

Treatment doesn't always stop incontinence completely, but the right products should help manage the problem and reduce the impact on your day-to-day life.

To qualify for continence products provided by the NHS, you're likely to need to meet criteria set out by your local NHS. If you're assessed as eligible for continence products, your district nurse or NHS continence service should arrange the supply free of charge. Your local doctor or health professional will explain what type of products and devices are available in your region.

You can buy many continence products in pharmacies and supermarkets but you should seek professional advice before using them permanently. It's important to identify the cause of your problem and there may be treatment that can help.

Shop around before you buy products as prices vary. Supermarkets and pharmacies will not charge you VAT on continence products, but if you're buying online or by mail order, you may need to fill out a VAT exemption form.

“After my care needs assessment I get my pads paid for. They used to cost me £20 a week!”

Carol, 83



There are a variety of pads, pants and other products but not all are available through the NHS. The following are unisex:

- Washable products such as re-usable pads, which often come as part of a pair of pants.
- Disposable pads held in place by close-fitting pants.
- Disposable pants, or all-in-one pads with plastic backing and adhesive patches to seal the sides. They're generally more suitable for heavy incontinence.
- A bed or chair protector in the form of disposable or washable pads.

For men there's also a range of products that fit over the penis and collect pee into a bag strapped to the leg. A 'penile sheath' is the most popular version of this and is available on prescription. Men can also wear pads and pants, or dribble pouches.

If you're having problems with extra laundry, speak to your local social services to see if there's any help available in your area.

Next steps



Continence Product Advisor's online tool can help you find out more about the range of products available and decide which type would best suit you (page 38).

Personal hygiene and comfort

Avoiding smell

Fresh pee shouldn't smell unpleasant, unless there's an infection. But it might start to smell if exposed to the air for long periods. Good-quality pads help absorb some smell. Keep wet clothes or sheets in a bucket with a lid until washed. Mop up spills quickly. The smell from bowel incontinence is more difficult to hide. Change soiled pads as soon as possible and put them into an airtight container or sealed bag.

Skin care

Washing regularly and drying yourself carefully with a soft towel helps to keep skin healthy. A health professional may recommend you use a barrier product to protect your skin. A balanced diet and plenty of fluids can also help keep your skin healthy.

Change pads regularly. If your skin becomes red or sore, make sure that any pad or appliance fits properly and isn't rubbing. You could also check whether you've developed an allergy to something, for example a washing powder or cream, or part of a pad. If your skin becomes broken, consult your district nurse or doctor immediately as this can lead to a skin infection or further skin breakdown.





Additional support and benefits

If you need more support there's help available.

Support from social care and the NHS

If you're having difficulty at home getting to or using the toilet, speak with your local council's social services department. They will carry out a needs assessment and if you meet eligibility criteria, they can provide items, such as handrails in the bathroom or a commode. These products are also available to purchase. For further information contact Living Made Easy (page 39).

If problems develop while you're in a care home, raise them with your doctor or district nurse, and ask that any long-term treatment, including eligibility for continence products, is added to your care plan.

If you have continence needs or develop problems while in hospital, they should be identified during your discharge assessment. The staff should make sure these are addressed in your care plan and discharge plan they send to your doctor.

If you're found eligible for continence products, you shouldn't have to pay for them. The NHS should arrange for a supply to be delivered to you regularly.

If you're unhappy with the way your continence needs are met by carers, by staff at your care home or at the hospital, you have the right to complain. Start by having an informal discussion with staff or the managers of the organisation providing your care. A relative or friend can make the complaint on your behalf. If you feel your concerns haven't been addressed, you might want to raise a formal complaint. The organisation must provide you with a copy of its complaints procedure on request.

For more information on the procedures for making complaints about a hospital or health service, see our factsheet **Resolving problems and making a complaint about NHS care**. In Wales, see Age Cymru's factsheet **Resolving problems and making a complaint about NHS care in Wales**.

For more information about making a complaint about care provided or arranged by social services, see our factsheet **How to resolve problems and complain about social care**. In Wales, see Age Cymru's factsheet **How to resolve problems and make a complaint about social care in Wales**.

Next steps

In England, if you'd like support to make a complaint about the NHS, contact your local Healthwatch for details of who can help (page 38). In Wales, contact your Community Health Council – you can find their contact details on the NHS 111 Wales website (page 39). In Northern Ireland contact the Patient Client Council by calling **0800 917 0222**.

Claiming benefits

If you have a physical or mental disability and have difficulty getting about, or need supervision or help when carrying out personal care tasks, you might be eligible for Attendance Allowance (AA) if you're over State Pension age, or for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) if you're under State Pension age. These are non-means tested benefits, so you can claim them regardless of your income or savings.

Having continence issues won't necessarily mean you can get AA or PIP, but you may be eligible if you need help with things like getting to and from the toilet, using the toilet, being reminded to go or changing your continence pads.

For more information about who qualifies for disability benefits, see our guide **More money in your pocket**. There are separate versions of this guide in Wales and Northern Ireland.



Work out what you may be entitled to by using our online benefits calculator at www.ageuk.org.uk/benefitscalculator. Alternatively, contact your local Age UK for a benefits check or help with making a claim. In Wales, contact your local Age Cymru.

Next steps



For information on claiming AA, call the Attendance Allowance helpline (page 37). In Northern Ireland, call the Disability and Carers Service (page 38). For information on claiming PIP, call the Personal Independence Payment helpline (page 40). In Northern Ireland, call the Personal Independence Payment Centre (page 40).

Dementia and incontinence

Someone who has dementia may forget to visit the toilet, or be unable to tell people when they need to go. They may be unable to recognise normal triggers that tell us we need the toilet, not remember the way to the toilet, or not recognise it when they get there.

In these cases, they might need regular, gentle reminders. If the person you're caring for forgets where the toilet is, a notice or picture on the door might help. A regular routine can also help, or you may need to learn to recognise signs they need the toilet, and discreetly encourage them to go at these times.

If this doesn't help or you are having difficulties, talk to your doctor or district nurse.

“My mum started having trouble remembering where the loo was. I've popped a sign up on the door now.”

Rita, 52



Next steps



See our guides **Caring for someone with dementia** and **At home with dementia** to find tips on making the bathroom safer for someone living with dementia. Alzheimer's Society offers advice for carers or people with dementia in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Useful organisations

Age UK

We provide advice and information for people in later life through our Age UK Advice line, publications and website.

Age UK Advice: 0800 169 65 65

Lines are open seven days a week from 8am to 7pm.

www.ageuk.org.uk

In Wales, contact Age Cymru Advice: **0300 303 44 98**

www.agecymru.org.uk

In Northern Ireland, contact Age NI: **0808 808 7575**

www.ageni.org

In Scotland, contact Age Scotland: **0800 124 4222**

www.agescotland.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society

Offers advice, information and support in England and Wales to people with dementia, their families and carers.

Helpline: **0333 150 3456**

www.alzheimers.org.uk

Attendance Allowance helpline

Information about how to claim Attendance Allowance.

Tel: **0800 731 0122**

Textphone: **0800 731 0317**

Bowel Cancer UK

A support charity for everyone affected by bowel cancer.

Tel: **020 7940 1760**

www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk

Bladder and Bowel Community

Provides a range of information and resources for people with bladder and bowel problems.

Email: help@bladderandbowel.org

www.bladderandbowel.org

Community Health Councils

Provide help and advice for those who have problems with or complaints about NHS services in Wales.

www.111.wales.nhs.uk/localservices

Continence Product Advisor

Website offering independent advice about continence products.

www.continenceproductadvisor.org

Disability and Carers Service

Information about how to claim Attendance Allowance in Northern Ireland.

Tel: **0800 587 0912**

Textphone: **0800 012 1574**

Disability Rights UK

Operates a National Key Scheme that offers people with disabilities independent access to around 7,000 locked public toilets nationwide.

www.disabilityrightsuk.org

Healthwatch

In England, a local Healthwatch provides information, advice and support to users of health services in your area. It can put you in contact with your local NHS Complaints Advocacy service.

Tel: **03000 683 000**

www.healthwatch.co.uk

Living Made Easy

Helps older and disabled people live independently at home and provides advice on equipment such as commodes and urinals.

Tel: **0300 999 0004**

www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk

NHS Bowel Cancer Screening helpline

Call the screening helpline for more information about bowel screening in England.

Tel: **0800 707 60 60.**

In Wales, call **Bowel Screening Wales**

Tel: **0800 294 3370**

In Northern Ireland, call the **Northern Ireland Cancer Screening** Programmes

Tel: **0800 015 2514**

NHS

Provides information about health conditions, treatments and services in England.

www.nhs.uk

In Wales, visit **NHS 111 Wales**

Tel: **111**

www.111.wales.nhs.uk

In Northern Ireland, visit **NI Direct**

www.nidirect.gov.uk

NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence)

Provides guidance on being healthy and treating conditions.

You can download:

- Urinary incontinence: the management of urinary incontinence in women www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng123
- Faecal incontinence: the management of faecal incontinence in adults www.nice.org.uk/guidance/CG49
- The management of lower urinary tract symptoms in men www.nice.org.uk/guidance/CG97

The information in these documents about treatment available on the NHS only applies in England and Wales.

Personal Independence Payment helpline

Information about how to claim Personal Independence Payment.

Tel: **0800 917 2222**

Textphone: **0800 917 7777**

In Northern Ireland, contact

Personal Independence Payment Centre

Tel: **0800 012 1573**

Textphone: **0800 587 0937**



† The Age UK network includes the charity, its trading companies and national partners (Cymru, Scotland and NI). We also work closely with local Age UKs. Age UK is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England (registered charity number 1128267 and registered company number 6825798). The registered address is Age UK, 7th Floor, One America Square, 17 Crosswall, London EC3N 2LB.

Help us be there for someone else

We hope you found this guide helpful. When times are tough, it's so important to get some support. Did you know you could help us reach someone else who needs a little help? Here's how:

1

Give your views on guides like this

Our Readers' Panel helps make sure the information we produce is right for older people and their families. We'd love you to join. Go to www.ageuk.org.uk/readers-panel.

2

Donate to us

Every donation we receive helps us be there for someone when they need us. To make a donation, call us on **0800 169 8787** or go to www.ageuk.org.uk/donate.

3

Volunteer with us

Our volunteers make an incredible difference to people's lives. Get involved by contacting your local Age UK or at www.ageuk.org.uk/volunteer.

4

Campaign with us

We campaign to make life better for older people, and rely on the help of our strong network of campaigners. Add your voice to our latest campaigns at www.ageuk.org.uk/campaigns.

5

Remember us in your will

A gift to Age UK in your will is a very special way of helping older people get expert support in the years to come. Find out more by calling **020 3033 1421** or visit www.ageuk.org.uk/legacy.

What should I do now?

You may want to read some of our relevant information guides and factsheets, such as:

- **Healthy living**
- **Adapting your home**
- **Advice for carers**

You can order any of our guides or factsheets by giving our Advice Line a ring for free on **0800 169 65 65** (8am-7pm, 365 days a year).

Our friendly advisers are there to help answer any questions.

All of our publications are available in large print and audio formats.

There's plenty of really useful information on our website, too. Visit **www.ageuk.org.uk/incontinence** to get started.

If contact details for your local Age UK are not in the below box, call Age UK Advice free on **0800 169 65 65**.



0800 169 65 65
www.ageuk.org.uk



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