

# Things to Consider When Choosing Incontinence Products.

Over 4.8 million Australians suffer some degree of incontinence. If you are dealing with this problem, you are not alone! Incontinence is the accidental or involuntary loss of urine or faeces. The problem ranges anywhere for a small leak to a complete loss of bladder or bowel control. A wide range of products is available to help deal with incontinence and enable sufferers to live life to the fullest.

There are five factors you should consider when deciding the products best suited to your needs.



## 1. Level of Incontinence

Incontinence products are available in everything from light pads to extra absorbent adult pull-ups, with all levels of absorbency in between. Consider which of these categories you fall into before making a selection:

Light – dribbling or occasional urine release

Moderate – large releases of urine but not full bladder release

Heavy – full bladder release during the day

Overnight – release of urine throughout the night

Faecal – loss of bowel control

The degree of incontinence will decide the level of absorbency you need and whether you need a pad or adult pull-up product. It will also determine whether you require additional protection with products such as chair and mattress protectors.

## 2. Reusable or Disposable

The big advantage of disposable products is their convenience and the wide variety of choices available. They are comfortable to wear, with highly absorbent cores that wick fluids away from skin. However, disposable products can be expensive to use continuously.

Reusable products cost more initially, but are cheaper in the long run. They will need to be washed and dried regularly and replaced every 6-12 months. Environmentally, reusable products put less strain on our landfill sites.

### **3. Your Size**

Choosing the right size is crucial to the effectiveness of an incontinence product. The wrong size, either too big or too small, can lead to leakage, which can cause skin rashes and abrasions, as well as embarrassment.

Our range of products comes in everything from XS to XL. However, you can't depend on manufacturers size designations to be consistent. One manufacturers "medium" can differ substantially from another.

Measure your waist and hip size, then use the larger of the two measures to select your size based on the manufacturers specifications.

### **4. Your Gender**

Many incontinence products are gender specific to ensure that protection is positioned where each gender needs it most. You will be able to choose between unisex products or those designed specifically for your gender.

### **5. Bedtime Needs**

You may want to consider using different products for day and night. Even when you have a relatively light level of incontinence that requires only a pad during the day, using a fitted brief overnight may make for a better night's sleep.

If incontinence is heavy a mattress protector is recommended even when using adult pull-ups. For bed bound patients a floor mat protects against spillage during patient dressing and sheet changes.

If injury or disability makes it difficult for to move from bed to the toilet in time then consider a urinal or bedpan.

Where the problem is long term you might want to consider a bedside commode. A bedpan is concealed within the frame of the chair and accessed by lifting the lid. It looks like a day chair in the bedroom but provides convenient toileting.

**Ask us for samples of disposables to let you find the product that suits you best!**

The Continence Foundation of Australia can provide more information and advice. Visit [www.continence.org.au](http://www.continence.org.au) or call **1 800 33 00 66**.

If incontinence is severe you may be eligible for the Australian Government's Continence Aids Payment Scheme (CAPS). To find out more and get an application, visit [www.bladderbowel.gov.au](http://www.bladderbowel.gov.au) or call **02 6269 1000**