

# Continence Care HANDOUT

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- + At least another 650,000 adults have difficulties with bowel control
- + In general terms incontinence means difficulties with the retention of urine and/or faeces

## Definition of Continence

*'The ability to store urine in the bladder or faeces in the bowel and to excrete voluntarily where and when it is socially appropriate'*  
(White, 1997)

- + If 'continence' is seen as a voluntary action in socially acceptable circumstances then 'incontinence' is any variation from this
- + Many people do not *consider* themselves incontinent but do experience leakages from the bladder or bowel

- + **Enuresis** is nocturnal incontinence (bedwetting)
- + **Enuresis** occurs most often in children but can continue into adulthood (Getliffe and Dolman, 1997)
- + **Primary enuresis** – where bladder control has never been achieved

## Urine Incontinence and Nursing Homes (Statistics)

- + Urinary incontinence affects 40% of men and women living in nursing homes (Royal College of Physicians, 1995)

- + 70% of incontinence sufferers can be cured
- + 30% can benefit from proper management

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## Faecal Incontinence

- ✚ Faecal incontinence can be:
- ✚ *Mild* or *severe*
- ✚ It can sometimes be referred to as *staining*
- ✚ *It affects*
- ✚ Children aged 5 to 16 - 1%
- ✚ People under 65 (living at home) – 0.4%
- ✚ People over 85 (living at home) – 15%

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**Stress incontinence** is the involuntary leakage of urine

*It can occur when a person:*

- ✚ Laughs
- ✚ Exercises
- ✚ Coughs
- ✚ Sneezes

- ✚ If the muscles controlling the bladder become weakened urine can leak
- ✚ It is more common just after childbirth and during the ageing process

- ✚ Stress incontinence can occur if either the sphincter muscle or the pelvic floor muscles become weakened
- ✚ When these muscles become weakened they cannot contract (tighten)
- ✚ Once weakened they are unable to cope with any extra pressure (e.g. a cough, sneeze etc)

## Who Suffers From Stress Incontinence?

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- + Women (after childbirth)
- + The elderly
- + People who are obese
- + People who have had surgery
- + People who cough excessively

## **Women are more likely to get stress incontinence when they have had a baby**

### **A survey of more than 15,000 women under 65 showed that stress incontinence affected:**

- + About 5 in 100 women who had not had children
- + About 7 in 100 women who had a baby by caesarean section
- + About 12 in 100 women who had a baby through normal childbirth
- + The number of children also increases the risks

## **Women and the ageing process**

- + Only about 3% of women under 30 are affected
- + More than 30% of women over 80 are affected
- + Oestrogen helps to keep muscles healthy so women are more likely to be affected as they go through the menopause

## **Obesity**

- + People who are obese are carrying extra body weight
- + This extra weight can put extra pressure onto the muscles of the bladder

## **Surgery**

- + People who have had pelvic surgery can suffer from stress incontinence *but only if there is damage to any of the muscles controlling the bladder*