



# Disability Services

## Information Sheet

### Continence Products

There are many people in society who suffer from urinary or faecal incontinence, or sometimes both. Not only can this be financially expensive, but the personal cost to the sufferer can be loss of dignity and independence.

Incontinence may affect people of any age, both male and female, and it is a condition that has many possible causes. Many people put up with incontinence thinking it is a normal part of ageing. Providing people with the information they need to seek help is a very important step in the management of incontinence.

With proper assessment by a health professional who has trained continence expertise, (such as a doctor or medical specialist, continence nurse advisor, or continence physiotherapist), incontinence may be cured, improved, or managed effectively through the use of continence products. For some people continence products may only be needed for a short time in conjunction with treatment, while for others the products may be a long-term solution to help with management of the incontinence.



### Range of Continence Products

There is a wide range of continence products available and new and improved products are continually being developed. When selecting a continence product many things need to be considered, including the person's mobility and lifestyle, the severity and frequency of the incontinence, the disposal or washing requirements and the cost and availability of the products. It is wise to seek professional help to guide you as you select suitable continence products. Being able to trial products may be useful to find which product best suits your needs.

The range of continence products available includes:

#### Disposable Pads

These are available in many sizes, shapes and capacities.

Many disposable pads are made of three layers. The top layer is usually non-woven and designed to stay dry. The absorbent middle layer contains a substance that converts to a gel when fluid is absorbed. This helps to reduce the chance of leakage and is designed to keep the pad dry against the skin. The outer layer is waterproof and may be colour coded to identify sizing in a range.

Disposable pads are designed to be worn with firm fitting underwear or stretch pants.

Some pads have an adhesive backing to help keep the pad in position.

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A wetness indicator may be a feature of some of the larger pads, and this indicator changes colour when the pad is reaching its maximum capacity.

Some pads do not have a waterproof backing. These are booster pads that are used inside another pad to increase absorbency.



### **Disposable Pants and All-In-Ones**

All-in-ones is a term given to a nappy-style disposable pad/pant available in a range of adult sizes. All-in-ones have resealable tabs on each side for fastening.

Pull up disposable pants have an elastic panel around the hip and waist. These pants also feature tear away sides for ease of removal of the pant.

### **Disposable Bed and Chair Pads**

Disposable bed and chair pads are absorbent and have a waterproof backing.

They are available in a range of sizes and absorbencies.

### **Reusable Pads**

There is a wide range of reusable pads in different shapes, sizes and absorbencies.

Many reusable pads are made of three layers. The top layer may be cotton, polyester or a combination of these. The middle layer is made of an absorbent material and the outer layer is usually waterproof.

Some of these pads are made as inserts to a specific pant, while some are worn as an absorbent pad with firm fitting underwear.

### **Reusable Pants**

There are reusable pant ranges and styles designed for men, women and children.

Reusable pants with built in absorbency are available in a range of styles and capacities. Some pants are a pull up style and some have a side or front opening.

Some reusable pants are holding pants, which are not absorbent and are used to hold a pad in place. An example is the range of stretch pants that are made of a fine mesh. These pants fit very snugly to the body and are designed to hold a pad firmly in position.

Swimming pants are also available. These feature drawstrings around the legs and waist to help contain incontinence.

### **Reusable Bed and Chair Pads**

These products are designed to absorb fluid and are generally not suitable for faecal incontinence. There are many sizes and ranges available.

### **Uridomes/Sheaths**

These may also be called condom drainage catheters or external male catheters.

The sheaths are made of a flexible material. The sheath fits over the penis and is connected to tubing which leads to a urinary drainage bag. Sheaths either have a band of self-adhesive on the inside or a separate adhesive strip to secure them in

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position. There are many sizes and styles of sheaths available. It is advisable to have a health professional such as a continence advisor to help with the selection and management of a sheath.

### **Urinary Drainage Bags**

There are many sizes and styles of urinary drainage bags available.

Leg bags are either worn strapped to the thigh or the calf. Leg bags are usually worn during the day and have a capacity range of 350ml, 500ml, 750ml to 1500ml.

Overnight urinary drainage bags generally hold two litres and may be hung on the side of the bed or supported on a stand.

### **Urinary Catheters**

A catheter is a hollow tube that drains urine from the bladder. There are many sizes and styles of catheters. A catheter may be inserted to empty the bladder and then removed (an intermittent catheter) or a catheter may be left in for a few days or a longer time period (an indwelling catheter).

A catheter is prescribed by a doctor or a qualified health professional and usually managed by qualified health professionals.

### **Waterproof Mattress Protectors**

There are many waterproof mattress protectors available in different styles and sizes. These protectors include waterproof draw sheets, fitted sheet styles, envelope styles or a fully enclosed zipped mattress protector.

### **Toileting Equipment**

Sometimes people may have difficulty getting to the toilet. Equipment that may help includes toilet seat raisers or surrounds, grab rails, commodes, urinals and bedpans.

### **Dressing Adaptations**

Adapted clothing with easy to use fastenings may be helpful for some people. Examples include nightwear and dresses with an opening at the back, trousers with side or front fastenings or replacing existing zips with velcro. There are companies that make a wide range of adapted clothing.

### **Odour Control**

There are specific odour control products designed to neutralise odours from incontinence problems.

### **Skin Care**

Care of the skin is very important for a person with incontinence; the skin should be gently cleaned and dried regularly. There is a range of skin care products designed for people with incontinence.

Please contact the Continence Resource Centre at the Independent Living Centre if you would like further information on continence products.



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The Continence Resource Centre (located at the Independent Living Centre) has an extensive continence product display and information on where these products may be purchased. The staff can provide information on many aspects of incontinence, including management strategies, continence services and information on funding schemes for continence products.

For further information or to make an appointment please contact the Independent Living Centre. The Independent Living Centre offers free advice on equipment and techniques to help you with everyday tasks.

### **Independent Living Centre**

11 Blacks Road  
Gilles Plains SA 5086

**Phone:**

1300 885 886 (SA & NT callers only)  
or (08) 8266 5260

**Fax:**

(08) 8266 5263

**Email:**

[ilcsa@dfc.sa.gov.au](mailto:ilcsa@dfc.sa.gov.au)

**Website:**

[www.sa.gov.au/disability](http://www.sa.gov.au/disability)

Accessible off-street parking is available.

**Bus routes:**

From the city T500/T501 or  
207/208 to Stop 28 Sudholz Road  
Timetable information: (08) 8210 1000

