



NATIONAL CENTRE FOR  
**FARMER  
HEALTH**

# Wise Health Continence

## Tackling a wee problem



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## Incontinence

- Loss or partial loss of bladder or bowel control
- **Affects**
  - Urinary incontinence affects up to 13% of men and up to 37% of women (AIHW, 2006).
  - 1:3 women who have had a baby
  - 10 - 20% of men over 65 years
  - 40% of women over 50
- Affects people socially, emotionally, physically, psychologically and economically
- No barriers in relation to age, ethnicity or gender
- Tonight 100,000 children will wet the bed as will 40 – 80% of people in nursing homes (Continence Foundation Australia 2003)





## Incontinence

- Bladder control problems can usually be cured or significantly improved
- You can be active in preventing problems
- Faecal & urinary incontinence is a common reason for residential care
- 50% of sufferers do not discuss incontinence





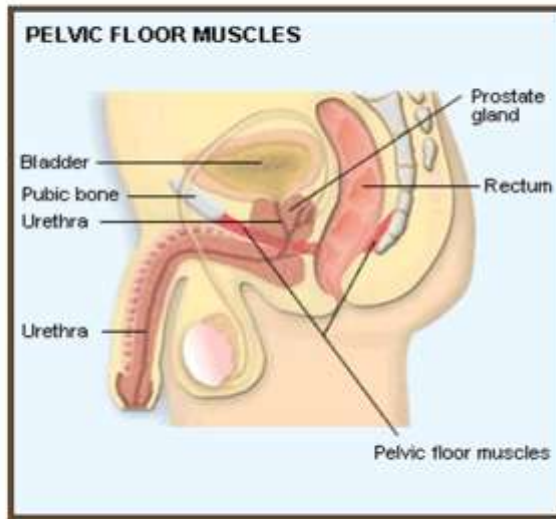
## Causes of incontinence

- **Neurological** – multiple sclerosis, parkinsons, spinal injury
- **Psychological Causes** – anxiety, depression, confusion, dementia, stress
- **Environmental Causes** – poor lighting, clothing, toilet far away, getting out of bed
- **Medical Causes** – weak pelvic floor, infections, drugs, obesity, pregnancy, alcohol excess, lack of mobility, diabetes, prostate problems
- **Social Mores** – emptying bladder when it is not full





## Pelvic structures - men



[www.myfr.com.au](http://www.myfr.com.au)



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## Why does the pelvic floor weaken?

- Pregnancy and childbirth
- Continual straining
- Chronic cough – bronchitis, smoking
- Overweight
- Persistent heavy lifting
- Hormone levels
- Lack of general fitness
- Neurological
- Some prostate surgery



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## Why improve your pelvic floor?

- Pelvic floor muscles (Kegel muscles) - forms floor of the pelvis - acts as a hammock holding organs in place
- Strong pelvic floor -increased sexual sensation vaginally, increased orgasmic response and faster erection of the glans clitoris
- Benefits for men – reduce premature ejaculation, assists with erectile dysfunction, reduce incontinence
- Important in men for bladder, bowel and sexual response



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## The bladder

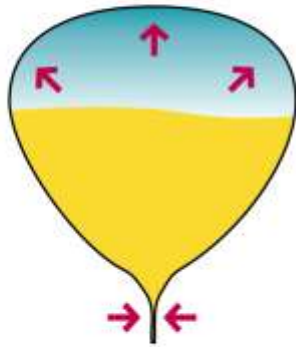
- Normal bladder capacity varies between 300 - 600mls
- The bladder has the ability to stretch up, and act as a reservoir for urine
- The bladder has the ability to contract down and expel urine



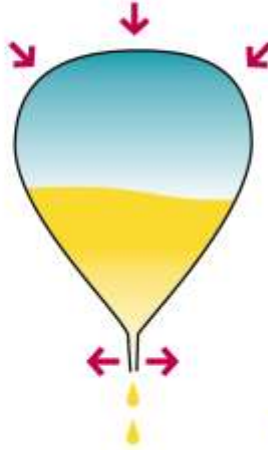
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## The bladder

BLADDER FILLING



BLADDER EMPTYING



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## Factors in poor bladder control

- Prolapse - (vaginal, rectal)
- Poor habits – emptying the bladder too frequently
- Medical conditions – neurological, prostate
- Cystitis – inflammation of the bladder
- Constipation – pushing and straining against the pelvic floor muscles.
- Body mass – every kilo extra that you carry places additional load on your pelvic floor
- Prostate surgery

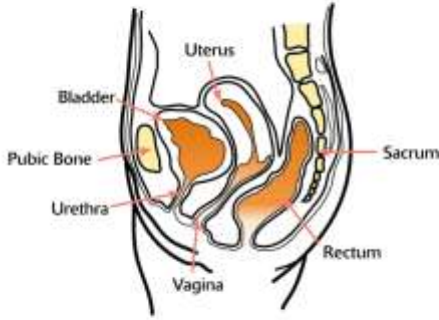


## Steps to a healthy bladder

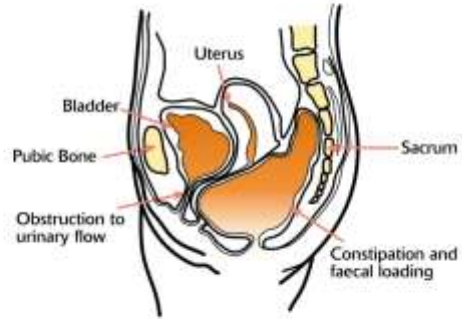
- Drink adequate amounts of fluid
- Limit or avoid both caffeine and alcohol
- Avoid going to the toilet as matter of convenience
- Strengthen the pelvic floor muscles - regular pelvic floor exercises
- If cystitis is associated with sex - urinate following intercourse
- Maintain good bowel habits - wipe correctly



# Avoid constipation



**NORMAL**



**IMPACTED**





## Steps to a healthy bowel

- Drink 1.5 - 2 litres of fluid each day, unless directed by your doctor
- Eat a diet high in fibre - 30 grams per day is recommended
- Regular exercise
- "Putting off" the call of nature - makes constipation worse
- Privacy
- Patience - avoid straining



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## Helping the bowel to empty

- **Don't ignore the urge to empty the bowel**  
It is best to empty the bowel soon after the urge to empty is felt - a hot drink at breakfast can assist.
- **Take your time when emptying the bowel**  
Worth allocating several minutes to ensure proper emptying.



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Defaecation - important aspect of gastro intestinal and pelvic floor health.



## Toilet position

- A 'seated squat' position improves rectal emptying
- Using a footstool, sit in a leaning forward position with feet apart and forearms on thighs
- Keep the back straight (see diagram – Royal Women's Hospital 2006).







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## Pelvic floor exercises

- Turn to the National Continence Guidelines in your Resource Manual [www.continence.org.au](http://www.continence.org.au)
- We are going to do pelvic floor exercises
- These need to be done everyday
- Part of your daily routine
- Further Information: **NATIONAL CONTINENCE HELPLINE FREECALL 1800 33 00 66**



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## INCONTINENCE VIDEO



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