



Healthy bladder and bowel habits



A guide to better control

5 steps to help you keep control

1. Eat well ...

to prevent constipation and to maintain a healthy body weight.

Eat a healthy diet rich in dietary fibre. We need at least 30g of fibre a day. The following is a daily guide to getting enough fibre:

- 2 serves of fruit
- 5-6 serves of vegetables
- 3-6 serves of grain (cereal) foods - use wholemeal or wholegrain breads, high-fibre breakfast cereals, brown rice and wholemeal pasta more often than white or refined choices
- Legumes, nuts and seeds are also excellent sources of fibre.



2. Drink well ...

to prevent bladder irritability and constipation.

Drink 1.5–2 litres of fluid daily unless advised otherwise by your doctor.

Limit caffeine, alcohol and sugary drinks as they can cause bladder irritation. Remember, cola, chocolate and some energy drinks are high in caffeine.

The best drink is water.



5 steps to help you keep control

3. Exercise regularly ...

to help prevent constipation and maintain a healthy body weight and a toned pelvic floor.

Keep moving. Aim to exercise for 30 minutes most days. Walking is a great exercise.

General exercise will help in keeping the pelvic floor toned.



4. Keep your pelvic floor toned ...

to maintain good bladder and bowel control.

Keep your pelvic floor toned with a regular pelvic floor exercise program.

The pelvic floor muscles give us control over our bladder and bowel.

Straining to open your bowels, being overweight, chronic coughing, heavy lifting, pregnancy and childbirth all can lead to pelvic floor weakness and bladder and bowel control problems.



For a pelvic floor exercise brochure, phone the National Continence Helpline on 1800 33 00 66.

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5. Practice good toilet habits ...

to prevent bladder and bowel control problems.

Go to the toilet when your bladder feels full; don't get into the habit of going just in case.

Go to the toilet when you get the urge to open your bowels; don't get into the habit of putting it off as this can lead to constipation.

Take time to completely empty your bladder and bowel.

Use the correct sitting position on the toilet: sit on the toilet, elbows on knees, leaning forward with your feet supported on a footstool.

Correct position



Knees higher than hips. Lean forward and put your elbows on your knees. Bulge out your abdomen. Straighten your spine.

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Signs you have a healthy bladder and bowel

- You pass urine 4–6 times during the day and no more than once over night
- You open your bowels anywhere between 3 times a day to 3 times a week
- Your bowel actions are soft, formed and easy to pass, i.e. no straining
- You feel in control and do not have to rush to the toilet or leak before you get there



Remember to practice these 5 simple habits for better bladder and bowel control

- Eat well
- Drink well
- Exercise regularly
- Keep you pelvic floor toned
- Practice good toilet habits

Contact

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For advice on bladder and bowel control problems,
phone the National Continence Helpline



National Continence Helpline

1800330066

The free National Continence Helpline operates 8am-8pm AEST Monday to Friday and is staffed by continence nurse advisors who provide information, resources and referrals to local services. The Helpline is managed by the Continence Foundation of Australia on behalf of the Australian Government.