

## Living With Incontinence – General Health Tips/Good Bladder Habits

### Watch Your Diet

Drink enough fluids - at least 6½ cups per day. Limiting daily fluid intake can actually worsen incontinence or lead to serious illness. Avoid beverages that can cause excessive urine production such as caffeine and alcohol, as well as beverages that can irritate the bladder, such as grapefruit juice and tomato-based products.

Try to “hold on” until you have at least 350mls in your bladder. This means only going to the toilet about 6 times a day. Don’t go to the toilet “just in case”.

Constipation can also contribute to bladder control problems. Repeatedly straining to use your bowels can have a very damaging effect on your pelvic floor muscles. Eat foods that are high in fibre to help you stay regular.

### Watch Your Weight

Even a few kilos can make a difference. A five to ten percent weight loss can help improve bladder control by reducing intra-abdominal pressure (pressure on the pelvic floor muscles).

### Keep Active

As with many medical conditions, doctors are recognising the importance of a positive attitude in managing incontinence. Remain fit and active and stay involved with family and friends so you’ll feel good about yourself.

### Coughing & Sneezing

A chronic cough or hay fever can also impact badly on your pelvic floor muscles. Learn to brace pelvic floor muscles before coughing, lifting, or sneezing.

### Choose Absorbent Products Carefully

Your health care professional or pharmacist can assist in selecting from the variety of absorbent products to manage incontinence. Make product selection based on absorbency and product features needed.