

# Myths About Incontinence

There is such a stigma attached to Incontinence. It is not discussed openly among sufferers, and as a result there are a lot of myths surrounding the problem.

## Myth #1:

### Having incontinence is a disease.

Incontinence is not a disease; it is a symptom or side effect of another medical condition. That's why it is so important to check with your doctor/ health care professional if you experience any type of bladder control problem. Treating the ailment often alleviates bladder control loss.

## Myth #2:

### Only old people have it!

Over 2.3 million women over the age of 35 in Australia and New Zealand experience incontinence. Women are affected 7-8 times more often than men. Approximately 20% of men over 65 suffer from urinary incontinence.<sup>1</sup> While the prevalence of urinary incontinence does increase with age, it starts in young women after they have a baby. About 7% of children aged 5-11 experience bedwetting! Without proper management, some of these children might develop urge incontinence later in life.<sup>2</sup>

## Myth #3:

### "This is as bad as it will get" or "It will get better by itself."

Men and women who suffer with incontinence generally report their symptoms to be worsening over time. The symptoms cannot simply go away by themselves unless you do something to help them. Luckily there is almost always something that can be done for urinary incontinence. It's just a matter of knowing where to go for help. Your doctor or health professional is always a good person to start with. If simple measures don't seem to help, they can refer you on to a physiotherapist or nurse continence advisor.

## Myth #4: Drinking less fluid will help.

In fact, urine that is more concentrated due to lack of fluid intake can irritate the bladder and cause more serious problems such as infection and dehydration. In addition, inadequate fluid intake can cause constipation, which may also make matters worse.

## Myth #5:

### Protection for incontinence can't be discreet.

Advances in absorbent technology have made it possible to put protection that used to be big and bulky into thin discreet products. Be sure to use a product that is specifically designed to absorb urine and contains Super Absorbent Material (SAM). This will assist in reducing odours. Ordinary feminine hygiene pads and pantyliners do not offer this type of protection.

## Myth #6:

### It's time to slow down or alter routines.

Incontinence can often be cured and can always be managed. Interference with your levels of physical activity must be kept to an absolute minimum. It is really important that you strive to continue your usual sport and recreation activities. Maintaining your current physical activity levels will help you avoid putting on weight which can make bladder control much more difficult to maintain. The Poise® and Depend® product ranges will allow you to carry on with your chosen activities as you have always done.

## References

1. P. Chiarelli, W. Bower, A. Wilson, D. Sibbrit. The Prevalence of Urinary Incontinence Within the Community: A Systematic Review. New Zealand Continence Association Inc
2. Dangar Research 2002.

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