

Strategies for Reducing Fall Risk:

There are many ways of managing incontinence, and in many cases it can be improved or even cured.

- Speak to your GP, district nurse or health care professional to assist with identifying and treating the cause of your incontinence. They can advise you of the services available.
- You are able to refer yourself directly to your local continence clinic.
- Pelvic floor exercises.
- Exercises to improve balance, walking and transfers (eg. getting in and out of bed and on and off the toilet safely).
- Use of a personal alarm, particularly for those who experience nocturia.
- Consider a bedside commode or urinal if the toilet is not close by.
- Daily routines can help people remember where the toilet is and how often to go.
- Avoid going to the toilet to off set the need to go again later or when out, as this can weaken your pelvic floor muscles.
- Wear clothing that can be easily removed or undone (e.g. loose fitting, velcro fastenings).
- Consider a non-slip mat on the floor beside and/or in the toilet.

- Leave a nightlight on in the bedroom and/or bathroom at night.
- Avoid drinking fluids 1-2 hours before bed time, but ensure you are drinking the required amount during the day.
- Sit when urinating to ensure full voidance.
- Ensure the path to the toilet is free from clutter and obstructions that become trip hazards.

Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Continence Clinic

The Continence Clinic is made up of a specialist team of Continence Nurses and Physiotherapists. The team offers care, advice and treatment to patients and their carers for a range of continence issues. Referrals from your GP, district nurse, and other health care professionals are accepted. You are also able to self refer yourself to the service by completing a referral form.

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Residents of Hammersmith & Fulham are advised to seek advice from their District Nursing teams.

Continence



A guide on how incontinence contributes to your risk for falls and how you can manage the condition

Falls Prevention Service

The facts about incontinence and fall risk:

- More than 2.5 million people over 60 in the UK experience urinary incontinence.
- Up to 60 percent of hospital patients and nursing home residents experience urinary incontinence problems.
- Urinary incontinence is an important risk factor for recurrent falls and hip fracture.
- Urinary incontinence is more common in women than men.
- Bowel and urinary incontinence is associated with increased risk of patient falls (up to 50 percent of falls are elimination-related).

Types of incontinence:

- Stress Incontinence – When you cough, sneeze, laugh or exercise. This is caused by a weak bladder outlet and pelvic floor muscles.
- Urge Incontinence – When a person experiences a sudden and frequent urgency to pass urine. As you get older your bladder becomes more unpredictable, may give less warning and needs emptying more often. This is normal, until it becomes a problem or starts to cause incontinence.

- Overflow Incontinence - When the bladder does not empty completely, causing a urine build up and possible “overflow” (frequent dribbling leakage).
- Nocturia – Being woken up more than two times per night to pass urine. This disturbs sleeping patterns and may lead to feeling tired during the day.

Incontinence Fall Risk Factors:

Urinary incontinence can contribute to falls risk in several ways:

- Rushing to the toilet in fear of not reaching it on time, particularly when getting out of bed at night, in the dark and feeling sleepy.
- Drowsiness during the day as a result of interrupted sleep may also put you at a higher risk of falling.
- Some medications used to treat incontinence, such as antidepressants (Cymbalta and Tofranil) and Anticholinergic medications (Ditropan, Oxytrol, and Detrol) can cause postural hypotension.
- Poor fluid intake – people tend to avoid drinking the recommended amount of fluid (8 cups per day), which can lead to problems such as dehydration and urinary tract infections. Reducing fluid intake can in fact exacerbate symptoms or urgency, frequency and incontinence.

- Urine incontinence may cause floors to become slip hazards.
- People may avoid going out into the community out of fear of not knowing where the next toilet will be. This may lead to social isolation and being unable to complete daily activities such as grocery shopping.
- You may become distracted when walking and from completing other tasks as a result of being focused on needing to go to the toilet.
- A fear of incontinence can also promote leg crossing and abnormal walking patterns.

Additional Falls Risk Factors:

- Reduced mobility and balance make it difficult to reach the toilet.
- Stiffness in the fingers and hands may make it difficult for you to remove clothes.
- People who use a walking aid may avoid using their aid in an attempt to reach the toilet in time. If you are unable to stand without support, this puts you at a significant risk of falling.
- People who experience conditions such as Alzheimer’s may forget to regularly go to the bathroom or where the toilet is.
- A shortage of public toilets when you are out in the community.