

Measures to Prevent Incontinence

Incontinence often develops in the later stages of dementia but can occur at other times. This might be due to difficulty finding the toilet, reaching it in time, or problems with co-ordination, movement, or communication.

The important thing to remember is that it is not the person with dementia's fault and it is nothing to be ashamed of. It can be distressing though so here are some tips to prevent somebody with dementia from being incontinent.

1. Keeping well hydrated is important to prevent water infections and constipation, both of which can lead to incontinence. Aim to drink 6 to 8 glasses of liquid per day. (Alz Soc 2020)
2. A healthy balanced diet with plenty of fibre to encourage bowel movements should be encouraged. Keep a check on bowel activity to make sure constipation is not developing.
3. Observe the person for signs of restlessness; fidgeting, pacing, holding their crotch, going into a corner of the room or adjusting their clothing could all be signs that they need the toilet.
4. Be aware of the language the person might use to refer to going to the toilet. Phrases such as "I need to go out", "it's coming" and "I need the thing" are common.
5. Some people respond when reminded to go to the toilet. Try prompting the person to go every couple of hours.
6. Make sure the person can find the toilet. Putting a simple picture sign on the toilet door is really helpful. Keep access clear and make sure the toilet is left unlocked and if possible ajar. At night it might be necessary to leave the light on.
7. Use clothing that's easy to remove such as pants with elastic waistbands instead of buttons and belts. Stay and help the person to use the toilet if appropriate otherwise move a discreet distance away to maintain the person's dignity and privacy.
8. For men ensure the toilet seat is left up.

If you need any help or guidance, want to find out about other activities and services, or just need someone to talk to who understands your situation, Dementia Friendly Keighley is here for you.

You can call us on **07452 773788** between **10am and 2pm daily**, text (**SMS**) or **WhatsApp 'CALL BACK'** on the same number or leave a message outside of these hours and we will call back as soon as possible. Please note: Times and days of our activities and services are subject to change, so please call for up to date information.

