

## Why should you exercise your pelvic floor?

### Pelvic floor muscles can become weak due to:

Pregnancy, childbirth, menopause, lack of exercise, age, weight gain, previous surgery, persistent heavy lifting.

Pelvic floor exercises can strengthen the muscle enabling control of the bladder and bowel and improving continence symptoms. Men should also actively carry out Pelvic floor exercises.

Sit comfortably imagine you are trying to stop yourself from passing wind from the back passage by squeezing and relaxing these muscles and trying to hold for as long as you feel able.

Link your exercises to daily activities such as having a drink or watching the television.

You may not notice improvement for several weeks so keep at it.

If you feel you need support or advice with pelvic floor exercises speak to your continence advisor.

You aren't alone, it is estimated up to 69% of people experience some type of incontinence (Nice 2018)

There are many contributing factors to incontinence and many ways to help aid symptoms.

Your continence advisor will be happy to support and advise you to manage symptoms, be realistic and allow time.

**01752 434759**  
**Livewell.continence@nhs.net**

**Mon-Fri 08.30-16.30pm**



Livewell Southwest



@livewellsw

## The Continence Team

We are a small team of specialist clinicians covering South Hams, Plymouth and West Devon, available for support, advice and information on the promotion and management of continence

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## There are many types of Incontinence

Often people who experience incontinence will not have one type but may have combined symptoms known as mixed incontinence, Incomplete emptying may also cause urinary incontinence it maybe necessary to have a bladder scan to rule out retention

**Stress:** Leaking when laughing, coughing, sneezing and lifting

**Urge:** Strong desire to pass urine or open bowels with inability to reach toilet in time

**Nocturnal:** Bed leaking or involuntary loss of urine overnight.

**Functional:** Cognitive or inability to reach toilet in time due to mental/physical disabilities

**Overactive:** Frequency in urinating unable to hold for at least 2 hours in-between voids

## Top tips for a healthy bladder

### Monitor fluid type and intake:

Try to reduce coffee, tea, fizzy drinks, citrus drinks and anything containing alcohol. These drinks will increase bladder activity and can lead to urinary leakage.

Aim for a fluid intake of approx. 1.5 to 2 litres each day (6-8 cups), when you don't consume enough fluid urine becomes concentrated which will lead to irritation to the bladder and constipation which will also have a profound impact on the bladder.

### Recommended drinks

Water

Milk

Diluted Juices

Decaffeinated Coffee + Tea

Milkshakes

Herbal Teas

## Top Tips for a healthy bowel








Do not delay opening your bowels when you have the urge to do so.

Avoid constipation and straining Type 1-2 stool (Bristol stool chart).

Try to keep your weight within the recommended range for your height.

Maintain a good fluid and dietary intake with three meals per day to keep the bowel active, monitor any trigger foods by keeping a food and bowel diary.

### Bristol Stool Chart

Type 1		Separate hard lumps, like nuts (hard to pass)
Type 2		Sausage-shaped but lumpy
Type 3		Like a sausage but with cracks on the surface
Type 4		Like a sausage or snake, smooth and soft
Type 5		Soft blobs with clear-cut edges
Type 6		Fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool
Type 7		Watery, no solid pieces. Entirely Liquid