

Types of Incontinence

Functional Urinary or Faecal Incontinence

What is it?

Functional incontinence is when the person is usually aware of the need to void urine or move their bowels but for one or more physical or mental reasons they are unable to get to a toilet.

This may occur in a person with poor memory/eyesight/mobility or who has difficulty removing clothing

Symptoms

Incontinence with no apparent bladder or bowel related cause

An unwillingness to go to the toilet because of depression, anxiety or anger.

It can also be exacerbated by environmental factors such as poor lighting, low chairs that are difficult to get out of and toilets that are difficult to access.

What solutions are available?

Identify what loss of function is causing the incontinence and finding positive solutions to promote continence for the individual.

Potential solutions include: -

- Voiding/toileting programmes for both bladder and bowel.
- Finding clothing that is easy to put on and take off and is acceptable to the individual's body image (not everyone is happy wearing jogging trousers, etc.)
- Introducing equipment that will promote independence in using the toilet – Occupational Therapist may be able to advise
- Look at the environment: signage, lighting, seating near a toilet/near a buzzer etc.

See Hints and Tips leaflets: -

- Voiding Programmes
- Gastro-Colic Reflex

See also: -

NICE Clinical Guidance - Urinary Incontinence in Women: Management

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg171>

NICE Clinical Guidance – Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms in Men: Management

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg97>