

Caregiver Assistance News

“Caring for You - Caring for Others”

Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

Serving Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike,
Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties in Ohio

www.aaa7.org **Helping You Age Better!**



APRIL 2014

Living with Incontinence

Incontinence is a problem that involves the leakage of urine or feces over which the person has no control. Bladder management medications are available. Other possible treatments include bladder training, exercises to strengthen the pelvic floor (Kegel exercises), biofeedback, surgery, electrical muscle stimulators, urinary catheters, prosthetic devices, or external collection devices. Not all doctors routinely ask about urinary function during an exam. If bladder control problems are an issue, tell your doctor about them.

A precise diagnosis for incontinence must be made in order to develop an effective treatment plan. If the primary care doctor cannot solve the problem, consult an experienced urologist. Treatments for bladder control problems start with learning how to improve bladder symptoms and typically include exercises. Some need medications, while others might need surgery. What's best for you depends on the type and severity of your bladder control problem.

Incontinence Specialists

- **Urogynecologist.** This is an obstetrician-gynecologist with additional training in problems that affect a woman's pelvic floor — the network of muscles that help support and control the bladder and other pelvic organs.
- **Urologist.** A urologist specializes in male and female urinary disorders, as well as the male reproductive system.

Managing Incontinence

Avoid alcohol, coffee, spicy foods, and citrus foods, which may irritate the bladder and increase the need to urinate.

- Give fluids at regular intervals to dilute the urine, which decreases irritation to the bladder.
- Provide clothing that can be easily removed.
- Keep a bedpan or a portable commode nearby.
- Use adult diapers under clothes.
- Keep the skin dry and clean.



Urine on the skin can cause pressure sores and infection.

Your patience and understanding will help the person maintain confidence and self-respect.

Source: Caregiving in The Comfort of Home; www.MayoClinic.com; www.NAFC.org

Helpful Tip

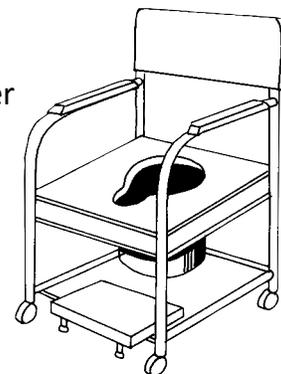
Be sure the person in your care goes to the bathroom regularly, ideally every two to three hours. Use an alarm clock to keep track of the time.



Catheters

A Foley urinary catheter is a device made from rubber or plastic that drains urine from the body. It is inserted by a nurse through the urethra (a tube that connects the bladder to the outside of the body) into the bladder (an organ that collects urine).

A Foley catheter greatly increases the risk of infection. It is chosen as a last resort to manage incontinence.



Disposal of Body Fluids

- Wear gloves (recommended for handling all body fluids).
- Flush liquid and solid waste down the toilet.
- Place used dressings and disposable (throw-away) pads in a sturdy plastic bag, tie securely, and place in a sealed container for collection.
- If urine is highly concentrated due to a bladder infection or dehydration, do not use bleach. The combination of ammonia in the urine and bleach can cause toxic fumes.

Urinary Tract Infection

A urinary tract infection may be present if the person has any of the following signs or symptoms:

- Blood in the urine
- A burning feeling when voiding
- Cloudy urine with sediment (matter that settles to the bottom)
- Pain in the lower abdomen or lower back
- Fever and chills
- Foul-smelling urine
- A frequent, strong urge to void or frequent voiding

Using a Commode

If the mobile person is missing the toilet, find a toilet seat in a color that is different from the color of the floor. This may help them see the toilet better. If they are failing to cleanse the anal area, or failing to wash their hands, use tact to encourage them to do so. This will help prevent the spread of infections.

A portable commode is helpful for a person with limited mobility. The portable commode (with the pail removed) can be used over the toilet seat.

Resource for You

National Association for Continence

Offers publications and services such as: brochures detailing what every woman and man should know about bladder and bowel control; disease-specific booklets on Multiple Sclerosis, spinal cord injury, and Parkinson's Disease; the Caregiver's Desk Reference; and more. Visit www.NAFC.org

Don't Fall, Be Safe!

Incontinence increases the risk of falls because of the rush to the bathroom to avoid leaking urine. Check to be sure you have done everything you can to improve the person's ability to remove clothing quickly and easily in the bathroom. Additionally, be sure the pathway to the bathroom is well-lit and safe with loose rugs tacked down. Try to shorten the time and effort it takes to get to the toilet.

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Managing Anger

Caregivers can easily become stressed, and the natural response to stress is anger. Expressing your anger or frustration to the person in your care never helps. Find positive ways to express yourself:

- Vent your feelings in a caregiver support group. Those in the group will understand how you feel and will help you find practical solutions.
- See a therapist, family counselor or clergy.
- Remember that a chronic illness can change personality and behavior.
- Positive communication is the key to lowering stress in relationships. Avoid accusations such as: "You make me angry." Instead say, "Please try to understand that being a caregiver is sometimes difficult."



Upcoming Alzheimer's Association Workshops Understanding and Dealing with Alzheimer's Disease or Another Dementia

alzheimer's 
association®

This program will provide an opportunity for families and caregivers to learn and ask questions about Alzheimer's disease and dementia, while receiving support from others in similar situations. Program is free of charge. No registration required.

Gallia County: 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm at Selected Locations (noted below)

May 27th - Understanding Behaviors (Arbors)

June 24th - Open Discussion (Holzer Assisted Living) • July 15th - Unspoken Grief: Losses of Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementia (Holzer Senior Care) • August 26th - Safety Considerations (Abbyshire Place)

Jackson County: 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm at Four Winds Nursing Facility in Jackson or Jenkins Care Community in Wellston (noted below)

May 15th - Open Discussion (Jenkins)

June 19th - Unspoken Grief: Losses of Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementia (Four Winds)

July 17th - Safety Considerations (Jenkins) • August 21st - Open Discussion (Four Winds)

September 18th - Activities and Interaction (Jenkins) • October 16th - Advanced Stage Issues and Decisions (Four Winds)

November 20th - Dealing with Holidays (Jenkins) • December 18th - Open Discussion (Four Winds)

January 15, 2015 - Making the Transition from Home to a Care Facility (Jenkins)

Scioto County: 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm at Best Care Nursing and Rehab in Wheelersburg

June 10th - Open Discussion • August 12th - Making the Transition from Home to a Care Facility

October 14th - How to Make Visits More Meaningful (At Home and Nursing Facility)/Dealing with Holiday Issues

December 9th - Understanding Challenging Behaviors

For more information about these programs and other similar programs available in or near your community, or for assistance with registering, please call Melissa Dever, LSW, from the Alzheimer's Association, at (740) 710-1821.



Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

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Website: www.aaa7.org • E-Mail: info@aaa7.org • Facebook: www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7

Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. serves the following counties in Ohio: Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton. Services are rendered on a non-discriminatory basis. Those interested in learning more about the services provided through the Area Agency on Aging District 7 can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277. Here, individuals can talk directly with a nurse or social worker who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs. The Agency can also be reached via e-mail at info@aaa7.org.

Safety Tips - Toileting and Alzheimer's Disease

Incontinence usually begins in the late part of the middle stage of Alzheimer's Disease (AD). Most AD caregivers fear they will not be able to handle this condition, but many learn to take it in stride and find that it is not as awful as they expected. Knowledge of the appropriate products and how to use them will help relieve any discomfort you may feel.

Incontinence in AD may be caused by confusion with finding the bathroom, inability to get there on time, or a urinary tract infection. Be sure to ask the doctor if there could be a physical cause for the problem, rather than the progression of AD.

A regular toileting schedule and reading signals for when the person needs to go to the toilet may help them to continue using the toilet for a longer time; however, you will probably need to use protection for the bed, since the person may sleep through the urge to go.



Source: The Comfort of Home for Alzheimer's Disease