



## **Bladder and Bowel Habits**

Bladder and bowel dysfunction will vary between individuals and it can affect one's quality of life. More than 4.8 million Australians of both genders at some point of their lives will experience some form of bladder or bowel dysfunction<sup>1</sup>.

An assessment of the pelvic floor is recommended to help manage symptoms and prescribe individual pelvic floor exercises.

There are certain signs and symptoms that patients may describe to you, that we would recommend require further assessment with a physiotherapist.

### Bladder signs and symptoms

***Urinary incontinence affects up to 37% of women and 13% of men. However only a 1/3 of these individuals will seek further help from health professionals to manage their incontinence<sup>1</sup>***

- Leaking with activities such as coughing, sneezing, exercising or lifting
- Rushing to the toilet with a sense of great urgency
- Incontinent on the way to the toilet
- Frequently going to the toilet
- Waking with an urge to go to the toilet more than once at night
- Sensation of not emptying your bladder completely
- Poor urine stream/flow
- Straining with emptying the bladder
- Trouble getting urine flow started

### Bowel signs and symptoms

***Faecal incontinence affects approximately 20% of men and 13% of women<sup>1</sup>***

***Constipation and faecal incontinence can influence bladder control and incontinence<sup>1,2</sup>. Constipation can affect 2-28% and faecal incontinence affects up to 2-12.1% of the general population. There are suggestions that both bowel dysfunctions can overlap with overactive bladder. Possible suggestions this could be the cause could be that the bladder and bowel share the same motor nerve supply or that overactive bladder medications can cause constipation.***

- Faecal soiling or incontinence
- Rushing to the toilet with a great sense of urgency
- Difficulty controlling flatulence
- Signs of constipation and straining with emptying bowels. Including bowel conditions such as haemorrhoids, anal fissures etc.
- Sensation of not completely emptying bowels
- Needing to empty bowels frequently

<sup>[1]</sup> Continence Foundation of Australia, 2016, retrieved from <http://www.continence.org.au/>

<sup>[2]</sup> Coyne KS, Cash B, Kopp Z., Gelhorn K., Milson I., Berriman S., Vats V. & Khullar V., 2010, The prevalence of chronic constipation and faecal incontinence among men and women with symptoms of overactive bladder, British Journal of Urology, vol 107, pp 254-61



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