

Why should you see a Continence Nurse?



It is estimated that incontinence affects between 3-6 million people in the UK. However, this figure is based on the number of people that report incontinence and it is suggested that there are many more who do not seek help due to feelings of embarrassment or that it is a normal part of post-childbirth and ageing.

However, this is not the case. It is not normal to leak urine and you don't have to put up with it as there are several Health Professionals such as Continence Nurses, GP's, Women's Health Physiotherapists, Urologists and Uro-Gynaecologists available to offer advice, support and treatment.

However, with so many options it can be baffling to know who is the best person to speak to.

It is a common misconception that Continence Nurses purely deal with continence assessments for the elderly and providing pads but it is much more comprehensive than this and indeed treat people who are not incontinent. Nurses need to gain relevant experience or undertake Specialist education in Continence care to be a Continence Nurse Specialist and the focus of treatment is to promote continence wherever possible.

Whichever Health Professional you choose to see, it is often beneficial to see a Continence Nurse before seeking further advice from Uro-Gynaecologists and/or Urologists so that she/he can complete a baseline assessment before offering advice and support to help you manage, implement conservative treatment such as exercises or medication, and refer you to other Health Professionals as necessary.

So what symptoms can they treat?

Continence Nurses see men and women for both bladder and bowel problems who often have other health problems such as Diabetes, and can provide advice in the treatment and management of symptoms for anyone who:

- ❖ Leaks when they cough and sneeze
- ❖ Can't reach the toilet in time or needs to rush
- ❖ Visits the bathroom frequently either in the day or at night
- ❖ Experiences constipation or bowel incontinence
- ❖ Has a long-term or intermittent catheter.

In most cases, this can be treated with:

- ❖ Pelvic floor exercises
- ❖ Bladder and Bowel re-training
- ❖ Lifestyle advice

However, a Continence Nurse can advise you on other products, services and treatments that may be suitable for you which may include other professionals such as Nutritionists, Fitness instructors in Pilates/Yoga or similar, or Complementary Therapies.