2017 World Continence Week information kit

Incontinence: No laughing matter

This information kit has been developed to help you promote World Continence Week, June 19-25, 2017. We encourage you to use the materials contained in this kit to help generate community awareness, media and publicity, supporting the Continence Foundation of Australia’s endeavour to increase awareness of bladder and bowel health.

The kit contains:
• key messages to be used when communicating information about World Continence Week and continence in general;
• suggestions for promoting World Continence Week in your local community; and
• tips for handling media interviews.

Key messages

It’s important to maintain consistent messages during World Continence Week. To help avoid confusion, the Continence Foundation has developed a list of key messages to use. By using these in all your communications, you give strength to these messages and ensure the public receive the right information.

• Bladder and bowel control problems affect one in four people.
• Bladder and bowel control problems will not get better on their own.
• Bladder and bowel control problems should be treated.
• Bladder and bowel control problems are not a natural part of childbirth or ageing.
• Bladder and bowel control problems can be treated, better managed or cured.
• Improve bladder and bowel health by adopting healthy habits: eat well, drink well, exercise regularly, keep your pelvic floor toned, practise good toilet habits.
• Uncomfortable discussing a bladder or bowel control problem? Phone 1800 33 00 66 for confidential advice
  Go to continence.org.au
  Go to continence.org.au/forum to connect and share your experience

Standard definitions

Continence Foundation of Australia: The Continence Foundation of Australia is the peak national organisation working to improve the quality of life of all Australians affected by incontinence. For more information, go to continence.org.au

The National Continence Helpline: The National Continence Helpline (1800 33 00 66) is staffed by continence nurse advisors who provide advice and resources to consumers and health professionals, and information about local continence services. The Helpline is a free and confidential service managed by the Continence Foundation of Australia on behalf of the Australian Government. It is staffed 8am-8pm AEST Monday to Friday.

The Incontinence Forum: The Incontinence Support Forum is a confidential online chat site for people affected by incontinence or caring for someone with incontinence. The forum is moderated by consumers and continence health professionals. To join the conversation, go to continence.org.au/forum
Spread the word

Incontinence affects children and men and women of all ages. While this year’s theme, *Incontinence: No laughing matter*, targets people, particularly women, who laugh off incontinence, wrongly assuming it is a natural part of ageing or having a baby, you can adopt your own theme, relevant to your target group or publishing outlet.

The Foundation has developed resources relevant to all groups, including a Toilet Tactics Kit for school students, a prostate guide for men, a guidebook for carers, a pregnancy guide and pelvic floor safe exercise advice, as well as more general healthy bladder and bowel health resources.

The Foundation also has a number of double-sided A3 posters promoting different themes to assist you with any promotional events you may be planning. You can order and distribute our resources and posters to your clients or via your networks. Remember, the Continence Foundation runs a World Continence Week promotion competition, with prizes for the most effective and innovative events or activities. Don’t forget to send us photos to share your event.

**Opportunities in your local area**

**Fitness centres:** Set up a display at your local fitness centre, gym or swimming pool.

**Medical clinics:** Decorate a medical clinic or hospital waiting room with leaflets, posters and balloons.

**Shopping centres:** Set up a display or a table with resources and balloons.

**Libraries:** Local libraries are often willing collaborators in publicising various event weeks. (Check your local library to see if they are signed up to receive a regular supply of *Bridge* consumer magazine.)

**Residential aged care centres:** Host a healthy afternoon tea to celebrate healthy bladders and bowels.

**Pharmacies:** Approach your local pharmacy about decorating a corner of their store or window. Ask about placing printed materials near their continence products section.

**Schools:** Include an article in the local school’s newsletter to highlight the need for healthy bladder and bowel habits, and the availability of the Toilet Tactics Kit. See continence.org.au/toilet-tactics

**Local media channels**

**Approach local media:** Offer to provide an article to your local newspaper. Use your special World Continence Week event to get their interest and give them something to build a story upon. Remember to check their deadline dates, as weekly publications often require information several weeks in advance. Confirm the story and photo opportunity a few days beforehand. If you are involving other people such as clients, be sure to get their written consent to be interviewed and/or photographed.

**Contact your local radio station:** Tell them about World Continence Week. Suggest your availability for an interview or talkback segment. It’s not as daunting as it seems, and you will only be required to provide basic information that gives an overview of the issue.

**Provide a short news item:** Offer to provide a short blurb, story or article to a consumer, organisation or club newsletter, e-news bulletin or website. Again, check their deadlines to ensure you submit the information.

**Strength in numbers**

**Approach community groups:** Collaborating with a local prostate or diabetes support group, hospital or sporting club can add weight to your promotional efforts.

**Speak up:** Approach a local community group that welcomes guest speakers, e.g. a new mums’ group or Rotary, and offer to provide a guest speaker at their next meeting or event.

**Get to know your audience**

It is important to familiarise yourself with your target audience so that you can adapt your message to suit their interests and needs. Think about the following when preparing for your interview:

- Who is your audience (health professionals or the general public)?
- What issues are most relevant to your audience?
- What are the key messages you want to communicate?
- What would be the best way to communicate these messages (e.g. humanising it by using a real life story or using a statistic to emphasise the severity of the issue)?
Use key messages
It’s important to have your key messages prepared before the interview. We recommend a maximum of three key messages, which should be short and succinct. Remember to always include where people can get further information or help:

- Contact the National Continence Helpline on 1800 33 00 66 for free information and advice or go to continence.org.au

The art of incorporating key messages into an interview is not easy to learn, especially when you are not the person controlling the interview. Don’t wait for the perfect lead-in: instead, steer the conversation in the direction you want by using one of the following linking phrases:

"and what is also interesting is that...most people think that bladder weakness is linked to ageing or childbirth and that it is something they will have for the rest of their life, when in fact it can be effectively treated, managed and in many cases, cured."

"and even more importantly ...people need to understand that bladder and bowel control problems won’t go away on their own, so they really need to speak to their doctor or a qualified health professional about the problem."

"and I would also say that...there is no reason for not seeking help. If people are too embarrassed to speak to their doctor, they can get free professional advice by phoning the National Continence Helpline on 1800 33 00 66? Go to continence.org.au for more information."

Use simple language
One of the hardest parts about media interviews is trying to get your message across in a way that is easily understood by your audience. Overcome this by using simple and easy-to-understand English, just as you would in day-to-day conversation. Try and avoid jargon or technical terms.

For example:
- bladder control problems (instead of urinary incontinence)
- bowel control problems (instead of faecal incontinence)
- bladder and bowel health (instead of continence)

Be personable
Audiences respond to personal language, as it makes them feel like you are talking directly to them. For example, "mums are more at risk of bladder control problems" is preferable to "women who have had a baby are at increased risk of developing incontinence”.

Here are some ways to make your interview more personable:
- give interesting statistics (see key facts below);
- use analogies that the audience can relate to; and
- share personal examples or anecdotal cases to illustrate your points.

Want to know more?
We are here to help, so please contact us if you have any questions. We enjoy seeing events held in your local community, so let us know of any media coverage, interviews or activities you’ve been involved in. Forward all enquiries to media@continence.org.au or phone the National Continence Helpline on 1800 33 00 66.
Fast facts

• In 2010, nearly 4.8 million Australians – comprising more than a quarter of the Australian population aged 15 years or over – were living with incontinence.

• This figure comprises 4,626,624 million community-dwelling Australians (aged 15 years or over) and 128,473 people living in residential aged care (aged 60 years or over).

• Of those in the community, 4.2 million people experience urinary incontinence (80 per cent of whom are women), and 1.3 million people experience faecal incontinence.

• By 2030 the prevalence is estimated to increase to 6.5 million Australians (with urinary incontinence, faecal incontinence or both) – equating to 27 per cent of the population aged 15 years and above.

• Incontinence affects both men and women – regardless of their age, gender or cultural background.

• Women are more likely to be incontinent than men – with the life stages of pregnancy and menopause a major contributing factor.

• Despite common belief, over half of the women living in the community with incontinence are under 50 years of age (1.7 million).

• Incontinence is more prevalent than asthma (more than 2 million), anxiety disorders (2.3 million) and arthritis (3.1 million).

• In 2010, the total financial cost of incontinence was estimated to be $42.9 billion – or $66.7 billion including the cost of burden of disease.

• In 2010, the estimated cost of residential aged care was $1.6 billion.

• In 2010, the total productivity loss due to incontinence was $34.1 billion.

• In 2010, the opportunity cost of informal (unpaid) care provided by loved ones to those with incontinence was estimated to be $2.7 billion.

Information based on Deloitte Access Economics The economic impact of incontinence in Australia 2011, commissioned by the Continence Foundation of Australia. For the full report go to continence.org.au