

FACT SHEET

Body worn disposable absorbent products

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Urinary incontinence can range from mild (for example, a few drops when coughing or sneezing) to severe (such as flooding without warning). However, the bother and impact of urinary incontinence is not simply related to severity. It depends on many personal characteristics such as age, gender, activity level, context (such as work situation), lifestyle and relationships. Very mild urinary incontinence can have a major and devastating impact on one person, while another with more severe incontinence may manage it with less stress.

Incontinence can occur for many reasons and the symptoms will vary. If not treated appropriately this can lead to fatal consequences. Anyone suffering from incontinence should have a continence assessment by a qualified professional.

Getliffe et al (2007) have shown that the impact of living with absorbent pads goes beyond pad performance characteristics alone and that users could benefit from advice, not only on the range of pads available, but also on strategies to reduce associated anxieties and practical aspects of coping.

Continence assessments should include recognition of lifestyle issues that may influence advice on the most suitable products for individuals.

Disposable absorbent products come in various absorbency capacities and designs. Essentially, they can be divided into three categories, however variations relating to attached waist bands exist.

Pads

A disposable absorbent body worn product designed to be held in place by underwear or stretch pants is often referred to as a pad and may be adhesive or non-adhesive.

Pull-ups

The disposable absorbent product shaped like underwear with elastic is often referred to as a pull-up.

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All-in-ones

Disposable absorbent nappy style products with side tabs are often referred to as nappies in the infant/ young children range, whilst in the adult range are often referred to as an all-in-one product.

Correct Fit

When using a disposable absorbent body worn product it is essential to get the correct fit. Pull-up and all-in-one products should fit snugly around the waist and legs or leakage may occur (leg and waist measurements are important).

Understanding Capacity

As disposable absorbent body worn products come in varying capacities, it is important to understand the amount of leakage that occurs and the capacity that is required. It is important to note that the absorbency can be described in two ways – total capacity and working capacity.

Total capacity refers to the total volume of urine that an absorbent product can absorb under laboratory conditions as advised by the manufacturer. Working capacity refers to the volume of urine that a pad holds when being worn by a person.

Leakage is not always related to capacity but may be related to poor fit.

It is important if one is experiencing incontinence to seek help from a qualified health professional.

REFERENCES

Getliffe et al (2007) Promoting Continence. Elsevier Health Sciences http://bladderbowel.gov.au/doc/Helping_Clients.pdf July 2010