



Incontinence

Alzheimer's

As Alzheimer's disease/related dementia progresses to the moderate and advanced stages, there will likely be issues involving loss of bowel and bladder control, also known as incontinence. The person's brain is receiving signals about the need to go, but their memory about how to carry out toileting becomes confused.

Consider

- Diminished awareness of the need to go to the toilet.
- Inability to wait until an appropriate time and place to go to the toilet.
- Delay in using the toilet due to distraction or involvement in other activities.
- Difficulty manipulating clothing (like zippers, belts or underwear) before toileting.
- Problems communicating the need to toilet.
- Difficulty in finding or using the toilet.

It is important to remember that your person may be susceptible to medical causes of incontinence including infection, constipation, hormonal changes or prostate enlargement. If medical conditions have been excluded, then it is time to begin other strategies.

Tips

Toileting

- Learn your person's usual habits.
- Prompt the person to use the toilet routinely.
- Start a schedule for toileting.
- Cue with words that are familiar with toileting, such as "pee" or "tinkle."
- Recognize the behavioral expressions or cues indicating a need to go.
- Ensure good lighting for toileting.
- Introduce visual contrast by installing a brightly colored toilet seat.
- Provide clothes that are easy to get on or off.
- Offer 6-8 glasses of water daily, finish fluids by 6:00 pm.
- Limit caffeine.
- To prevent infection, keep your person clean and dry.

Products

- For comfort consider padded toilet seating.
- For safety install grab bars and non-slip floors.
- Consider using flushable wipes or no rinse soap products.
- Consider using creams or ointments that create a protective barrier.
- Use products like washable briefs, pads & disposable briefs.

If everything you've tried doesn't seem to be working, don't be afraid to ask for help from medical providers, durable medical equipment distributors or other caregivers.

While incontinence is not pleasant, it can be managed successfully with time and patience to locate the right approach and solution.



Alzheimer's Institute &
Sun Health Research Institute

For more information, visit www.BannerAlz.org
or tune into our podcast, *Dementia Untangled*