



# INCONTINENCE 101

## Understanding, Managing, and Thriving

# The First Steps to Confidence

Living with incontinence, or caring for someone who does, can feel overwhelming at times, but it doesn't have to be. Incontinence, though common, can bring both emotional and physical difficulties, but it doesn't define who you are.

But what if this experience could become an opportunity? With the right guidance and tools, you can take control of your situation, reclaim your confidence, and emerge stronger.

Whether you're managing incontinence yourself or supporting a loved one, **this guide is here to provide the knowledge and resources needed to transform obstacles into opportunities for growth and resilience.**



# Understanding Incontinence

## WHAT IS INCONTINENCE?

Incontinence refers to the involuntary loss of bladder or bowel control. It can range from minor leaks to significant voids, affecting millions of people worldwide. It can feel like an unfair opponent: disrupting your daily life, causing frustration, and sometimes making you feel powerless. It's okay to acknowledge the challenges — it's the first step toward overcoming them.

### LIGHT INCONTINENCE



Sporadic, minor leaks often triggered by physical activity, sneezing, or laughing.

### HEAVY INCONTINENCE



Frequent or uncontrollable leaks, occurring both day and night. Bowel incontinence is typically categorized as heavy.

## WHEN TO SEEK HELP

If symptoms start interfering with daily life, such as interrupting sleep, causing discomfort, or leading to skin irritation, it's time to consult a medical professional. Incontinence is common, but it doesn't have to be a "normal" or inevitable part of life.

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*Incontinence is very common, often treatable, and regardless, very manageable.*

Adam Greenberg, President & Founder of NorthShore

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# Causes of Incontinence

Incontinence can result from a variety of medical, neurological, or lifestyle factors. Understanding the root cause is essential to finding the right solutions.

## BLADDER AND BOWEL DYSFUNCTION (BBD)

This common cause stems from nerve or muscle dysfunction, which can prevent proper bladder or bowel control. Other contributing factors include:

- Diet and lifestyle:
- Medicinal side effects
- Stress or anxiety
- Neurological conditions such as diabetes or pelvic floor disorders
- Injury or damage to the nerves controlling the bladder

## NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS (ND)

Certain conditions impact the brain and nervous system, interfering with bladder and bowel control. Examples include:

- Alzheimer's Disease
- Parkinson's Disease
- Stroke
- ALS
- Epilepsy
- Traumatic brain injuries





## FUNCTIONAL BARRIERS

For some, incontinence isn't caused by medical dysfunction but by physical or cognitive barriers, such as:

- Mobility issues or arthritis that make reaching the bathroom difficult
- Cognitive impairments, such as dementia, that hinder communication or recognition of the need to use the restroom
- Physical barriers in the environment, like stairs or long distances

## OTHER FACTORS

Lifestyle and life stages can also play a role in incontinence, such as:

- ***Pregnancy and childbirth:*** Hormonal changes and pelvic floor strain can lead to incontinence
- ***Aging:*** Decreased muscle strength and reduced bladder capacity are common as we age
- ***Diet and habits:*** Certain foods, drinks, and habits (like smoking) may exacerbate symptoms

# Types of Incontinence

Understanding the different types of incontinence is a crucial step toward effective management. Knowing what you're dealing with can motivate you to seek solutions, build confidence, and take meaningful action.

## **STRESS URINARY INCONTINENCE (SUI)**

Leaks occur due to pressure on the bladder, often from sneezing, laughing, or exercising. This is commonly caused by weakened pelvic floor muscles.

## **FUNCTIONAL INCONTINENCE**

Physical or cognitive challenges prevent timely access to a restroom.

## **URGE INCONTINENCE (OVERACTIVE BLADDER)**

A sudden, intense need to urinate, often followed by leaks.

## **MIXED INCONTINENCE**

A combination of two or more types, such as stress and urge incontinence.

## **OVERFLOW INCONTINENCE**

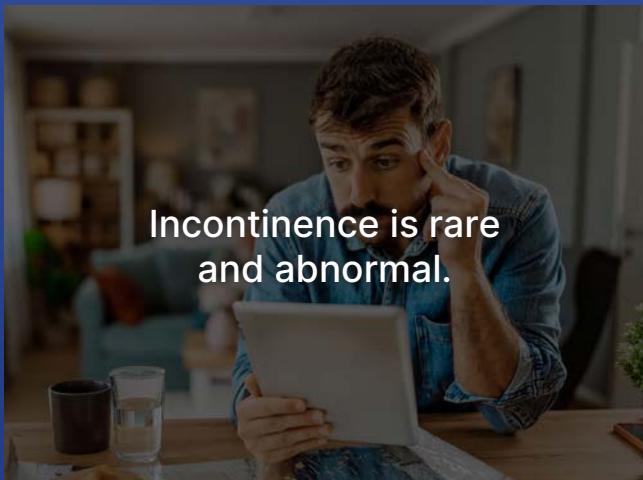
Difficulty emptying the bladder fully, leading to consistent dribbling or leaks.

# Debunking Incontinence Myths

## MYTHS



Only older adults experience incontinence.



Incontinence is rare and abnormal.



Incontinence products are bulky and obvious.

## FACTS

Incontinence can affect individuals of any age due to medical conditions, lifestyle factors, or pregnancy.

Incontinence affects over 33 million Americans\* – roughly 10% of the population. It's common, often treatable, and very manageable.

Modern incontinence products like NorthShore's are discreet, comfortable, and highly effective – offering reassuringly strong protection and renewed confidence.

# Navigating Incontinence

## FINDING THE BEST PRODUCTS FOR YOU

Managing incontinence is a journey, and it's important to remember that no one wins a fight alone. The right products can provide the support needed to regain confidence and control. Since there's no one-size-fits-all solution, finding the best options often involves some trial and error. Start by identifying the type and severity of incontinence you or your loved one is experiencing:

For light to moderate incontinence, a **liner or guard** worn inside regular, washable underwear can offer sufficient protection.

For frequent or heavy leakage, an **adult diaper** or **pull-on** can provide better coverage, and adding a **booster pad** can increase absorbency for extended wear and fewer changes.

Deciding the type of diaper depends on both you and your loved one's comfort level. If your loved one is still able and willing to use the toilet at times, a pull-on style diaper may provide the most flexibility. For all-day or overnight protection, a maximum-absorbency diaper-style brief might be the ideal option.



# What Type of Incontinence Products are Available?



## Diaper-Style Briefs with Tabs

These traditional tab-style briefs are perfect for quick changes on the go and offer premium protection. **MegaMax®** adult diapers deliver up to 12 hours of reliable protection, making them ideal for overnight use and extended wear with maximum comfort and peace of mind.



## Pull-On Style Underwear

Designed to feel and fit like regular underwear, pull-ons are ideal for those who can still use the restroom independently. **GoSupreme®** offers exceptional comfort, absorbency, and a secure fit, with up to 8 hours of protection across the front, rear, and sides.



## Liners and Guards (Pads)

Discreet and highly absorbent, liners and guards are designed to fit comfortably inside regular underwear. The contoured shape and built-in leak guards in **DynaDry® Supreme** provide enhanced protection and secure containment for peace of mind throughout the day.



## Booster Pads (Diaper Doublers)

Flow-through booster pads provide extra protection by enhancing the absorbency of any adult diaper or pull-on. **EternaDry®** booster pads are slim, soft, and equipped with adhesive backing to stay securely in place, offering the flexibility to stack multiple pads for tailored protection.



## Incontinence Care Essentials

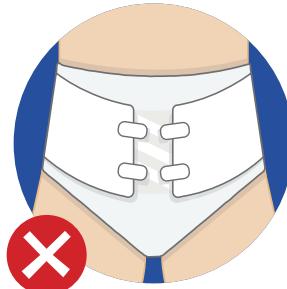
Complete your incontinence care routine with **Supreme Quilted Wipes** and **DiscreetShield Disposal Bags**. Thick, soft wipes provide effective cleansing while soothing sensitive skin. Opaque, fresh-scented bags ensure discreet, odor-free disposal of incontinence products.

# Finding the Right Fit

Finding the perfect fit is essential for preventing leaks. A product that's too loose or too tight won't perform effectively, no matter its absorbency. That's why NorthShore® offers a wide range of sizes, from XS to 3XL, ensuring every customer can find the size that works best for them.

## DIAPER-STYLE WITH TABS

Brief should fit snugly with the placement of the tape tabs on the hips and no gaps around the legs.



Too Big



Too Small

## PULL-ON STYLE UNDERWEAR

Underwear should fit snugly touching the crotch with no gaps around the legs.



Too Big



Too Small

# NorthShore Sample Program

Finding the right incontinence products can be a journey, but NorthShore makes it easier with our Sample Program. Choose from a variety of products and sizes to test at home, so you can find the perfect combination of fit and absorbency for your unique needs.

Best of all, you can receive up to **6 free samples**—just pay for shipping!\* Whether you need discreet daytime protection or maximum overnight coverage, our sample program ensures you feel confident in your choice before committing to a full order. Visit [northshorecare.com/getsamples](http://northshorecare.com/getsamples) to explore options today!

\*Maximum of six samples per order, limited to a quantity of 1 per product. Delivery and taxes added in checkout, where applicable.



# Taking Control of Your Journey

## FINDING SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

Managing incontinence can feel isolating, but you don't have to face it alone. Support and resources are readily available to guide you:



### Consult Medical Professionals

Work with healthcare professionals to develop a personalized care plan.



### Join Support Communities

Build connections with others who understand the challenges of incontinence and can share similar experiences. Support can come from a variety of places:

- **Online Forums:** Participate in online discussion boards for thoughtful conversations about living with incontinence.
- **Social Media Groups:** Private Facebook Groups and Reddit communities provide safe spaces for open conversations.
- **In-person Support Groups:** Explore support groups offered by hospitals, clinics, and community centers for face-to-face connection and guidance.
- **Nonprofit Organizations:** Access extensive resources from organizations like the [National Association for Continence \(NAFC\)](#), including educational materials and peer support networks and forums.



### Stay Informed

Subscribe to NorthShore's newsletter to learn expert tips, product recommendations, and more.



# Lifestyle Tips for Comfort and Confidence

For most individuals who experience incontinence, wearing a diaper or absorbent product does not preclude them from using the toilet like anyone else. For many, diapers become a valuable safety net for when they are unable to make it to the toilet in time. Incorporating healthy habits into your daily routine can make a significant difference in managing incontinence and improving overall comfort and confidence.



## STAY HYDRATED

It might be counterintuitive at times, but staying properly hydrated can prevent overactive bladder symptoms. However, if increased hydration starts to lead to more middle-of-night trips to the bathroom or enuresis, it can also be helpful to shift your fluid intake toward the first half of the day.



## AVOID DIETARY IRRITANTS

Coffee, tea, and soft drinks are the most common culprits, but everyone's digestive system is different. Try keeping a food and beverage journal for a week to see if any patterns start to emerge.



## SET A BATHROOM SCHEDULE

A good schedule solves so much, especially when it comes to incontinence. Making sure you or your loved one has a set time to use the bathroom helps to ensure fewer surprise accidents and rushing to avoid any near misses.



# Starting the Conversation

Living with incontinence can feel isolating, but opening up to loved ones or professionals is a key step toward support and solutions. Here's how to start the dialogue:

## 1 Find a Safe Space

Choose a private, comfortable moment to share your thoughts and feelings with someone you trust.

## 2 Speak Honestly

Express how incontinence affects you, both emotionally and physically. For example: "I've been struggling with leaks, and I'd like some advice."

## 3 Invite Dialogue

Encourage understanding by asking for feedback or support. For example: "Do you think it's time to explore options with a doctor?"

## 4 Normalize the Experience

Remind yourself and others that incontinence is common and manageable—it's not something to face alone.

## 5 Reach Out for Support

Talking to a healthcare provider can help you explore treatment options and find a plan that works for you. For additional guidance, NorthShore's Customer Care team is here to answer questions and assist with selecting the right products to support your needs. Visit [northshore.com/contact-us](http://northshore.com/contact-us) to connect with our team.

# A Journey to Confidence

## RECLAIMING YOUR POWER

Incontinence doesn't define you or your loved one's life. Every journey has a turning point—a moment of realization where you take control and move toward a brighter future.

With the right tools, habits, and support, you can confidently manage incontinence and live life on your terms. Remember: you are not alone. Millions of people face similar challenges, and there are so many resources and communities available to help you succeed.

Reclaiming control is about more than managing symptoms—it's about rediscovering joy, confidence, and freedom. Small steps lead to transformative changes, and each effort brings you closer to living without limits.

Your journey to empowerment begins now. Embrace it with courage and confidence, because you deserve to live a life full of freedom and dignity.





## Find Your Perfect Fit with NorthShore's Product Finder!

Discover the ideal incontinence products for your needs with our easy-to-use tool. Take the guesswork out of incontinence care and enjoy unmatched comfort, protection, and confidence.



**Visit [NorthShore.com/Product-Finder](http://NorthShore.com/Product-Finder)**  
for personalized assistance & recommendations.

