

Always dispose of products in an airtight container. When traveling or sharing a house with others, dispose of each incontinence garment in a plastic bag with a zip-style seal.

How can I get rid of odor?

When stool or urine gets on your bedlinens or clothing, wash them immediately. If you depend on a helper to do your wash or to take you to a laundromat, store the soiled items in an airtight container. Baking soda or white vinegar added to the wash water may eliminate odor in clothes and linens. Use one or the other, not a combination of the two. If you are using white vinegar in the wash water, follow it with one or two cold water rinses. Clothing made of 100% polyester may have to be thrown away, because it is difficult to get the smell out of this fabric.

The air around you deserves attention. Use an air freshener that neutralizes odors, not one that leaves a strong smell of perfume. Potpourri and incense, available in grocery stores, drug stores, and card shops, will keep your house smelling fresh. Sometimes people are not aware that an odor is present. If you are incontinent, find someone you trust to tell you honestly if there is any odor anywhere.

How do I become a Quality Care® Donor?

You may send a check (\$20) to NAFC, P.O. Box 1019, Charleston, SC 29402 or call 1-800-BLADDER to order by credit card. This entitles you to a quarterly newsletter subscription. Every issue includes helpful information about causes and treatments for incontinence. As a Donor, you also receive *Resource Guide® - Products and Services for Incontinence*, a complete directory of incontinence products and services.

National Association for Continence (NAFC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of people with incontinence. NAFC is a leading source of education, advocacy, and support to the public and to the health profession about the causes, prevention, diagnosis, treatments, and management alternatives for incontinence.

Always consult your doctor before trying anything recommended in this or any other publication that speaks to general health issues.

For more information about incontinence, write or call:

NAFC

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Charleston, SC 29402

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This publication is supported by an educational grant from

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DPI-07/00 2.5M

Incontinence & Odor Control

Staying Clean and Fresh

A publication of
*National Association for Continence
formerly Help for Incontinent People*

Incontinence & Odor Control

Staying Clean and Fresh

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People with bladder control problems need to be concerned about odor. Advertisements on television and in magazines remind us not to offend others with “unpleasant” odors. Concerns about how we are perceived by others when sitting in church or standing in the supermarket checkout line is natural, and people with bladder control problems need to pay attention to deodorizing their skin and urinary products.

What causes urine to smell bad?

Normal urine does not necessarily have a foul smell. Many people with bladder control problems limit the amount of fluids they drink in hopes of reducing troublesome leakage. This causes the urine to become highly concentrated — that is, very “strong.” It will appear dark yellow and have a bad odor. You can prevent your urine from having an unpleasant odor by drinking six to eight glasses of water per day. Dilute, uninfected urine does not have a strong or unpleasant odor.

Infection is also a cause of foul-smelling urine. If a strong or foul-smelling odor exists, contact your physician for diagnosis and treatment of a possible urinary tract infection. If an infection goes untreated, it can sometimes damage the kidneys.

There are other causes of odor in the urine. Some foods, beverages, and medications affect the smell of urine. This depends on each person’s body chemistry but everyone seems to identify asparagus and coffee as producing a stronger, more distinct odor. Some medications may also change the way your urine smells or looks, so be sure to talk to your pharmacist if you are taking a new medicine and note a difference in the way your urine looks or smells.

What can I do about it?

Internal deodorant tablets such as Derifil® or Nullo® have proven useful to many incontinent people. The deodorizing tablets are taken by mouth, and the manufacturers’ instructions advise that it takes time (2 to 14 days) to get satisfactory results.

Vitamin C is another effective urine deodorizer. Speak to your healthcare professional about this; it might not be good for you to take Vitamin C because of other medical conditions you have or other medicines you are taking. You should not substitute the Vitamin C in tablets with Vitamin C in citrus fruits and juices. Citrus fruits and juices may cause your urine to be irritating to your bladder and may cause a bad odor in the urine too. If you have a normal, healthy bladder and no problems with frequency or pain before or during urination, good juices for you to drink are cranberry, cherry, apple, pear nectar, and other non-citrus juices. Non-carbonated water is always best.

To keep urine acidic and naturally reduce odor, drinking cranberry juice (six to eight ounces a day) may be helpful. (If you are diabetic or overweight, be careful! Cranberry juice is high in sugar. Look for a low-calorie cranberry drink.)

How do I control odors?

The best way to control odors is a combination of

good hygiene and the use of commercially-prepared cleansers and deodorants. Overall body cleanliness and the use of fresh, clean undergarments daily is essential. After voiding or bowel movements, wipe from front to back. Clean the area at each pad or appliance change with a gentle cleanser — rinsing and drying thoroughly. If the skin is dry or reddened, a moisturizing cream may be used. For further skin protection, a protective ointment (not urine soluble) may be applied to the skin as a final step.

Keeping skin, appliances, and pads clean and frequently washed or changed is the best guarantee against odor.

What if I wear incontinence products?

When you buy disposable absorbent products, read the package to see if there is an odor-reducing material in the pad or garment. This should not be a perfume but rather a material that actually prevents odor from forming.

If you are wearing absorbent products or collection devices, there are several important steps you should take to guard against odor. First of all, the urine and stool must be contained. Adult briefs and pads should be worn close to the body. A properly fitted adult brief or a pad held in place by a stretch mesh brief or an incontinence pant will insure that you are not offensive to anyone nearby. Urine collection devices, such as a condom catheter, external pouch, or leg bag, should be leakproof and air tight. All reusable parts should be disinfected regularly with a commercial cleaner or with a solution of one part white vinegar to two parts water. Bleach is harsh and, though it kills bacteria, it does not dissolve urine crystals the way vinegar and commercial cleansers do. It’s best to clean appliances the way the manufacturer recommends.