



Bladder & Bowel UK

Supporting people with bladder and bowel problems

part of Disabled Living

SPORT AND CONTINENCE

The summer is upon us and with it a whole host of national sporting events; The World Cup, Wimbledon and the Open to mention a few. There will be some professionals taking part in these major events who will be experiencing bladder or bowel problems, as these are often a hidden problem and rarely visible to others.



Sport is such a brilliant way of maintain physical fitness and wellbeing alongside, in many cases, having a pleasurable and social aspect. However, how many people experience bladder and bowel problems that affect their participation in sport? Some people, especially ladies but some gents, experience stress incontinence during exercise which can affect their motivation for taking part due to embarrassment and discomfort. It is, also, true that many who never experience incontinence but may experience for example urinary urgency or constipation are restricted by their bladder and bowel conditions when considering participation in sporting activities.

It is essential as part of an overall holistic continence assessment to ask about lifestyle activities, current and any that maybe the individual does not feel able to be part of any longer. It may be a post natal lady who has stopped her aerobics class due to stress incontinence. Through proactive management, advice and support individuals can get back to sports and hobbies they like or seek alternatives when functionality of the bladder, bowel and pelvic floor are explained. It is advisable for anyone experiencing pelvic floor muscle weakness to switch from a high impact sport to a low impact sport. Advice should, also, be given on how to prepare for sporting activities to prevent discomfort, leakage etc during the activity.

Maybe some individuals prefer to be spectators of sport and this activity can, also, be affected by bladder and bowel problems as it may mean not been close to a toilet or lack of public toilets and facilities. BBUK has produced a Just Can't Wait card that is available to individuals who feel they need to access toilets urgently, frequently in the absence of the availability of public toilets.



We need to be as proactive as possible as continence professionals in promoting support and advice as much as possible to enable continuation of positive involvement in sport for those who want to take part and those who enjoy watching sport. Encourage individuals to seek help to enhance quality of life to continue and return to a sport they enjoy!

Let's hope the sportsmen and women from the UK do us proud!

