

inform

living with healthy habits



COVER FEATURE

Mind & Body in harmony

Simple daily practices to improve your mental and physical wellbeing

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The Mindful Plate

How your food choices may be impacting your mental health

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Restoring Balance

The connection between quality sleep and your wellbeing

PLUS

From Isolation to Inclusion

How community access is helping people with a disability thrive

Navigating Recovery

Creating healthy habits during your post-hospital care

Effective ways

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Good Food

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1. Beekman D et al (2020) Best practice recommendations for holistic strategies to promote and maintain skin integrity. Wounds International.



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Welcome to the latest Inform! With spring on the horizon, it's time to start soaking up the longer days and embracing healthier habits. In this edition, we dive into the world of wellbeing - focused on nurturing your mind, body, and community connections.

We shine a light on the transformative power of community access for people living with disability, and how fostering social connections and participation in community activities can lead to greater confidence, independence, and improved wellbeing.

Explore the vital connection between diet and happiness, and how nourishing your body with nutrient-rich foods can not only improve your physical health but also stabilise your mood and emotional regulation. Senior Psychologist – Jenny Koadlow – introduces us to mindful eating practices and the correlation between psychological health and diet.

Nourishing your mind and body becomes particularly important during recovery from an operation or accident. In 'Navigating Recovery' we share essential tips for creating healthy habits during your post-hospital care journey to ensure a speedier and safer return to daily life.

Hear from Continence Clinical Nurse Consultant - Jane Clarke - who shares the fascinating connection between quality sleep, overactive bladder symptoms, and your overall wellbeing. Learn about restoring a healthier balance of managing OAB symptoms in a place often overlooked - our sleep.

Brimming with insightful articles and practical tips aimed at improving your mental, physical, and social wellbeing through the cultivation of healthier habits, we hope this edition inspires you to embrace healthier habits. Great change comes from small improvements in our daily lives.

We are always inspired by stories of people regaining their independence and creating new pathways of living life, their way. If you would like to share your story with us, please reach out to our editorial team at communications@iagroup.org.au.



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MIND & BODY IN harmony

Simple daily practices to improve your mental (and physical) wellbeing.

When you think about exercising, you probably picture someone playing sport, going to the gym, or maybe going for a walk. Few people think that exercise should include giving our brain a workout too.

Positive mental health practices are just as important to a healthy body as physical exertion. People that have good mental health habits can translate that into overall healthy habits and good physical health.

Many mental health conditions can also lead to co-morbid physical health conditions including temporomandibular joint dysfunction, greater risk of stroke, cardiovascular disease, obesity, cancers, and irritable bowel syndrome (to name a few).

If you add in daily life stressors, overindulgence of unhealthy foods, sweet carbonated and alcoholic drinks, and smoking, this can cause even more combinations of stress to increase, or anxiety-based symptoms and comorbidities to heighten.

There are ways to reduce our anxiety symptoms through regular mental health exercises. Let's take look at a few different techniques to easily try from the comfort of your home (or wherever you may be) to improve your mental and physical health.

Mindful breathing

Breathing is essential to life. But when you start to focus on your breathing by taking longer, slower breaths, you are able to relax your whole body and be mindful in the moment. This is mindful breathing.

Another technique is 'belly breathing'. Rest your hands (fingers slightly interlocked) on your diaphragm and take a deep breath in (pushing your stomach out as you inhale). As you breathe in your fingers should come apart. As you breathe out, your fingers should come together again.

Purposeful relaxation

Many people hold anxiety in their jaw, their temples and forehead area of the face. This can lead to headaches, balance difficulties and ear problems (and in some instances, temporomandibular joint dysfunction). This can be painful and debilitating at times.

If you notice this discomfort in your jaw or face, slowly relax these muscles, lightly push your tongue against the roof of your mouth and then release. When you release, drop your jaw so your teeth are no longer touching and slowly breathe in through the gap between your teeth. Repeat 5-10 times. You should notice

the tension start to release from your cheeks, jaw, and forehead.

Bodily awareness

Understanding what is going on in your own body can help reduce that lingering feeling that something is not right in your body. Take a deep breath and begin to scan your body and feel where you are holding tension, anxiety and possible pain or discomfort. Acknowledge the discomfort, feel it, and think 'is this just an ache, tension or is it something more like an injury'.

Once you have worked though the feeling in your mind, think, is my back or neck aching due to the way I am sitting or standing, do I need to do some stretches or correct my posture, or do I need to seek professional advice to reduce the discomfort.

Getting physical

Physical movement helps get your heart rate up to a level that releases feel-good endorphins in the brain. A 20-minute, brisk walk is enough to get your body moving.

Higher intensity exercises will see the body continue to keep burning fat and have higher levels of endorphins be released, long after the exercise has stopped.

For people with limited movement, some studies have shown that by even by going outside in a motorised chair or mobility aid has beneficial effects on the brain and body. The body may experience some movement as their chair traverses the ground, and it may lead to social interactions which stimulate the brain further. Alternatively, people with this level of disability can do modified physical exercises through the aide of appropriate exercise equipment.

There are many other mental and physical health techniques that are out there. So, whether you try one, or combination of these exercises, you are getting your mind and body moving.

By creating regular, healthy habits to exercise your mind, you will see positive mental (and physical) gains over the long-term.

Written by Samuel Maraldo (Psychologist, Independence Australia).



So, get out there and give it a go- you never know what you might achieve.

THE MINDFUL plate

How your food choices may be impacting your mental health and wellbeing.

We've all heard the saying 'you are what you eat', but when it comes to your overall physical and mental health, this rings very true. A healthy diet and well-managed relationship with food contributes significantly to our mental health, moods, and overall wellbeing.

Psychological health and diet are more correlated than we realise.

Most studies have found that when we experience feelings of sadness or loneliness, we tend to make poor food choices and we tend to rely on 'comfort food' to suppress any negative emotion.

According to the World Health Organisation, optimal health necessitates the adoption of a nourishing diet.

The relationship between diet, immune response, and depressed mood is intricate and complex. Whilst physical activity is very important in promoting the feel-good hormones, so too are healthy foods and mindful eating practices in promoting good mental health and happiness.

Mindful eating (and a mindful diet) means being conscious of your food choices and eating patterns, paying attention to what your body needs to achieve optimal mental health and physical wellbeing. It also means enjoying and being fully aware of what we are eating.

So how can we implement mindful eating practices for better health and wellbeing?

Consuming a diverse range of natural and nutritious foods is crucial for maintaining a healthy body and mind.

That's why we start with eating the rainbow.

Incorporating fruits and vegetables of different colours, every day, is a great start. Plants contain different pigments (or phytonutrients) which give them their colour. Different coloured plants are linked to higher levels of specific nutrients and are high in fibre. This is the foundation of a balanced diet.

Then start layering in complex carbohydrates (think, brown rice, barley, whole grains), proteins (be they plant-based, lean meat, fish or eggs) and a dose of healthy fats and oils (nuts and seeds). Some types of seeds, nuts, fish, oils, and leafy green vegetables all provide essential fatty acids (omega 3 & 6) that are needed for brain function, heart and skin health.

Combined, these groups are often referred to as a 'Mediterranean diet' and are free from highly processed foods including high salt content, refined

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carbohydrates (like white sugar), saturated fats, and industrially produced trans-fats.

A treat or two is perfectly fine, and most certainly encouraged - especially when shared with friends! However, when 'comfort' or 'junk' foods (often high in sugar and fats) are consumed in great quantities, the long-term impacts can be harmful to our mental health and wellbeing.

Moderation is key.

Opting for more nourishing and unprocessed meals will sustain your body with the vitamins it needs to nourish the brain and protect it from oxidative stress that can damage cells and limit your brain function and capacity. It's these nutrient rich sources that boost energy levels, improves your immune system's performance, assists in detoxification, and reduces inflammation.

We know that poor mental health is affected by more than just dietary patterns and nutrition. Making healthier and more mindful food selections ensures your mental health and quality of life is at its best.

Feelings of positivity, happiness, and contentment are more likely to be present when individuals have a healthier diet and more harmonious relationship with their food.

Although we may be what we eat, and people don't live on bread alone (even if it is wholegrain!), we also need safe shelter, nature to appreciate, social connections. And of course, exercise and sleep.

Written by Jenny Koadlow (Senior Psychologist, Independence Australia) and Sha'Ron McConville (Diploma in Counselling Student, ACAP).

Disclaimer: All information presented in this article is factual according to our psychology/counselling team at Independence Australia. For individualised nutrition and dietary information, we recommend contacting industry professional dietitians for diet plans appropriate to your specific needs.

RESTORING *balance*

The connection between quality sleep, overactive bladder and your wellbeing.

Overactive bladder (OAB) is more than just an inconvenience – it can significantly impact both your physical and mental wellbeing. The constant urgency, frequent trips to the bathroom, and restless nights. OAB can have a substantial negative effect on people’s physical and mental health.^[4]

Fortunately, you can restore a healthier balance of managing OAB symptoms in a place often overlooked: our sleep.

The intricate dance between sleep and OAB symptoms is more profound than you might think. Poor sleep quality can lead to increased stress and anxiety, which are known to ramp up the intensity of OAB symptoms. When stress levels increase, so do cortisol levels - triggering hypersensitivity in the bladder and resulting in urges to urinate.^[2]

By improving sleep quality, we can dial down stress levels, offering respite from the relentless cycle of urgency.^[1]

Sleep disruption doesn't just stop at stress. It interferes with our body's balance of hormone regulation and blood pressure - both critical in controlling bladder function.

Studies have shown that insufficient sleep can disrupt the body's naturally lower nocturnal blood pressure and production of a hormone called 'arginine vasopressin', leading to increased urine output at night.^[3]



Improving sleep quality can play an important role in alleviating symptoms of OAB, offering several potential benefits that contribute to better management of the condition.

By creating better sleep habits, you can reduce these disruptions and provide a reprieve from nocturia and accompanying OAB symptoms.

Improved sleep quality can also have a positive impact on other factors associated with OAB, such as obesity and metabolic health. Research has shown that sleep deprivation can contribute to weight gain and promote metabolic disturbances, both of which are risk factors for OAB.^[6] By prioritising rest and quality sleep, you are more likely to maintain a healthier weight and metabolic balance, potentially reducing the likelihood of OAB symptoms.

Additionally, better sleep sets the stage for a more active lifestyle—a crucial component in OAB management. Physical activity, including targeted exercises like pelvic floor exercises, has been shown to improve OAB symptoms.^[5] With improved sleep, people are more likely to have the energy and motivation to maintain a regular exercise routine, thereby supporting OAB management.

To help you on your journey to a better night's sleep, here are some practical tips:

- Avoid drinking alcohol or caffeine before bedtime.
- Try and drink most of your fluid intake in the earlier part of the day, avoiding excessive fluid intake at least 2 hours before bedtime.
- If your prescribed medications cause excessive urine production (diuretics or 'fluid tablets'), try taking them earlier in the day.
- Elevate your legs during the day or consider wearing support stockings or socks to prevent fluid build-up on lower limbs.
- If you do wake at night, try to avoid going 'just in case' - this may reduce your bladder's holding capacity over time.

- Reduce the risk of falls by clearing clutter and trip hazards from the path to the toilet and consider using a night light.
- Sleep disorders and underlying health conditions which cause excessive urine production at night may require medical intervention or pharmacological therapies for treatment and management.

Improving your sleep quality can have multiple, positive effects on OAB symptoms. Combined with reducing stress and anxiety, regulating blood pressure and hormone production, weight management, and a more active lifestyle, sleep offers potential benefits that contribute to better management of OAB and your overall wellbeing.

While these benefits can be significant, it's important to remember that OAB is a complex condition that may require additional medical interventions and lifestyle changes. If you are living with OAB, you should consult with healthcare professionals for individualised advice and treatment strategies.

Written by Jane Clarke (Continence Clinical Nurse). Jane has been a registered nurse for over twenty years, with a special interest in Continence. She has worked in public health, private enterprise and industry spheres, and holds a Masters of Nursing and Masters of Business Administration



Click here or on the QR code to visit our online Continence Article Library for more information on continence related topics.



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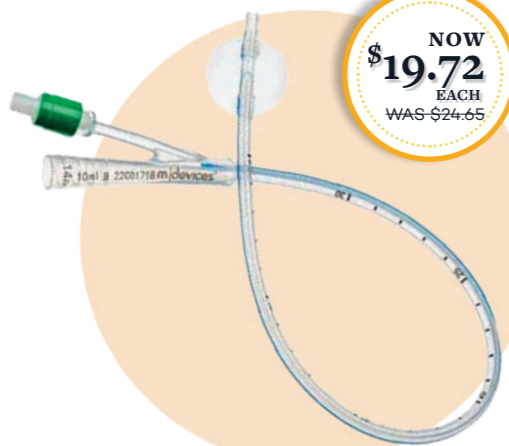


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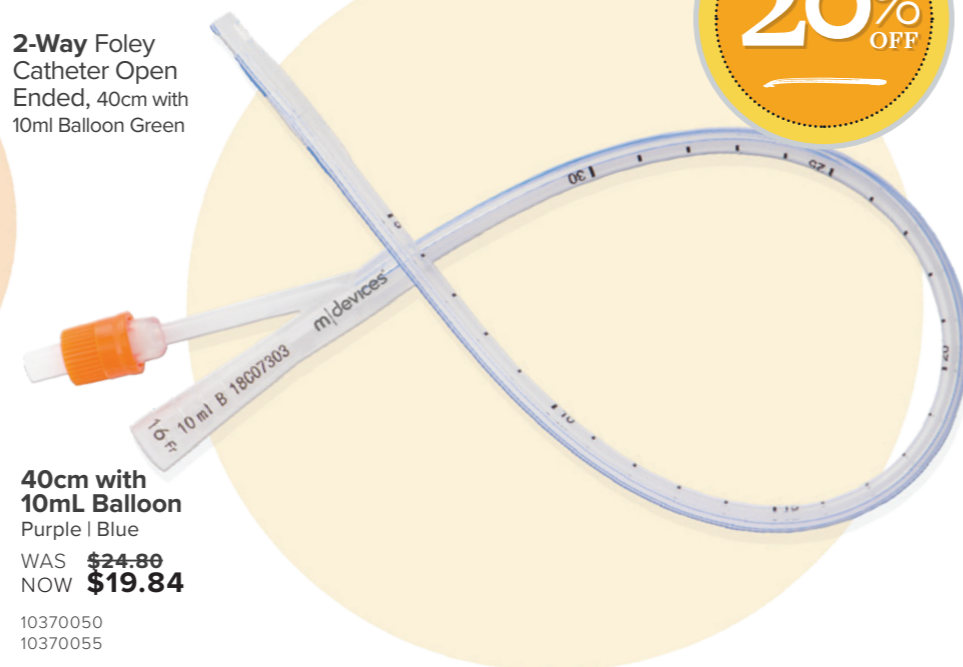
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FROM ISOLATION TO inclusion

How community access is helping people with a disability thrive.

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, more than one-quarter of Australians with a disability do not leave their home as often as they would like due to feelings of fear and anxiety, discrimination, fear of judgement and lack of funding.

This lack of social interaction and community access leaves many people feeling isolated and lonely, depressed, anxious, and severely impacts a person's self-confidence. The long-term impact leads to poor mental and physical health conditions, and leaves some completely immobile and socially disconnected.

That's where the importance of community access comes in.

Community access is an important aspect of providing access for a person with a disability to social connection, recreation activities and being able to do the things that bring joy and fulfillment.

This enables people living with disability to interact with their community and enrich their lifestyle with character building opportunities. Be that heading to a local park, food shopping, participation in team activities or hobby groups, attending community or cultural events, and so much more.

Through community access supports, Independence Australia is enabling people living with disability to grow their confidence, reconnect with community, and regain their independence.

By enriching their relationships with others, their local community, and themselves, people with a disability can lead happier and healthier lives.

Cory lives with an intellectual disability and has experienced the negative impact of social isolation and lack of community access. Having struggled with bullying, social isolation, low self-confidence and lack of community access throughout his life, Cory was determined to change that after connecting with his new support worker, John.

“I had trouble trusting people and I used to sit by myself and not talk to anyone at family functions. I used to get weird feelings in my stomach when going out or meeting new people. It took me a while to trust anyone or rely on anyone to support me.” shares Cory.

John empowered and supported Cory to navigate social situations by engaging in regular activities that he is interested in like bowling, kayaking, gardening, and connecting with his local Neighbourhood House.



Most importantly, Cory is creating new friendships.

Community access has been proven to provide people living with a disability a newfound sense of self, belonging and overall confidence to navigate social situations. With John's support, Cory has gone from experiencing social isolation and anxiety to actively participating in social activities and having a greater sense of belonging in his community.

“John has helped me build relationships with others. He has helped me learn how to talk to others, helped me build my confidence.

I feel comfortable getting out in the world now,” shares Cory.

This change has boosted Cory's confidence and improved his quality of life - highlighting the important role community access plays in improving mental and physical wellbeing.

Community access may look different for different people, but one thing is certain – providing access for a person with a disability to social connection, recreation activities and being able to do the things that bring joy and fulfillment have a positive impact on a person's mental health and wellbeing.



“Attending the neighbourhood house has allowed Cory to beat social isolation, interact with others and build upon his confidence,” shares John.

The social connection created through these activities helps reduce feelings of stress, anxiety, and depression, and promotes healthier eating, increased physical activity/exercise and weight management.

Not just that, social connection and healthy relationships can also improve sleep and overall quality of life. All of which keeps mental health at a balanced and healthy level.

Cory is now heavily involved with his local bowling team, nurturing his new garden, attending social events on his own, forging new friendships and capturing his adventures in nature through photography and painting.

Last year, Independence Australia delivered thousands of hours of community support services and care to people living with disability or other personal needs.

Help us continue changing the lives of people living with a disability to retain and regain their independence.



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NAVIGATING recovery



Creating healthy habits during your post-hospital care and recovery journey.

Going through recovery after an operation or injury can be extremely stressful and emotional. Between feelings of worry, stress, sadness, and anxiety – as well as the physical limitations - recovery time can be challenging to navigate.

During recovery, we often prioritise the physical therapy and support, but your mental and emotional wellbeing also contribute significantly to the progression of your recovery.

Maintaining healthy habits during your post-hospital recovery journey is essential. Not only for a speedy recovery, but a healthy and safe one too.

Independence Australia's range of support services help people regain their functional independence sooner after an injury, operation or hospital stay. Our team of qualified and trusted professionals have shared their top five tips for creating healthy habits during your post-hospital recovery.

Healthy diet

Maintaining a healthy and nutritious diet is essential in helping your body rebuild its strength and immunity to ensure a speedier recovery. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables is a great place to start, and in some cases your health professional may recommend a specific diet to gradually increase your nutritional intake.

Movement & Exercise

Getting up and about after an operation or procedure can be daunting. Dedicate between 15 – 30 minutes of daily physical movement or exercise to help your mind and body recover, and keep your spirits up. Try going for a brisk walk or tending to your garden and watch how your mind and body responds.

Sleep well

While you sleep, your cortisol levels lower allowing growth hormones to focus on rebuilding injured tissues. Sleeping well reduces stress and improves mood too. Create a consistent sleep routine by going

to bed around the same time each night and aiming for 7 to 8 hours of sleep.

Stay connected

Connect with others, whether it be your family, friends, or a support worker to regain access to your community. Activities and social groups will reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness. Connecting with your community also encourages better social and emotional health as you recover.

Relish in your interests

Keeping your mind active with things that interest you will help to improve your emotional wellness and reduce any negative feelings during your recovery. Things like listening to music, catching up on that television show you've been getting around to, reading your favourite book, keeping in touch with your loved ones (and more).

By adopting these healthy habits, you not only accelerate your physical recovery and reduce the risk of complications, but also allow for a more resilient, healthier you.

Always be sure to follow the medical advice provided by your specialist or doctor as requirements may vary depending on your individual situation.

Click here, or on the QR Code for more information on Independence Australia's NDIS and TAC registered post-hospital and in-home care services.



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5 EFFECTIVE WAYS TO INCREASE *your* VITAMIN D INTAKE

Vitamin D is one of the most important vitamins our body needs, and has been linked to improving our overall mood and mental wellbeing. It helps keep our bones healthy and strong, increases our ability to absorb calcium, improves our immune system and facilitates healthy cell growth.

1 Daily dose of sunshine. Careful, daily sun exposure will feed your body with Vitamin D for healthier bodyfunction. Always remember to be sun safe!

2 Eat from the sea. Oily fish including tuna, salmon, mackerel, and herring are rich sources of vitamin D (plus Omega fats too!)

3 Fortified foods. Some manufactured foods are fortified with added vitamin D including milk, orange juice and cereal.

4 Eggsellent! Egg yolks are particularly high in Vitamin D and will boost levels immediately

5 Consider supplements. If your vitamin D levels are extremely low, your doctor may advise on a healthy and organic supplement to boost vitamin D levels.



Winter Skincare Management



In winter, you may find your skin requires an increased level of hydration, so using some of the below dermatologist tips¹ may help you keep your skin hydrated in the cooler weather:

- ✓ Use a soap-free wash²
- ✓ Moisturise immediately after bathing¹
- ✓ Opt for a moisturiser that is fragrance free and free from common irritants
- ✓ Consider changing to a cream instead of a lotion for extra hydration
- ✓ Choose skincare products that are dermatologically tested

How QV can Help

At Ego, we understand the science behind healthy looking skin, that's why we've created a whole range of products that suit different levels of hydration. Proudly Australian made and owned, QV is dermatologically tested, free from fragrance and common irritants to be suitable for use on even the most sensitive skin.



QV to **Hydrate** normal to dry skin | QV to **Hydrate** very dry skin | QV Intensive to **Relieve** extremely dry skin | QV Intensive to **Soothe** extremely dry & cracked skin

QV Originally developed for the Queen Victoria Hospital, QV is specially formulated to care for your skin. **AUSTRALIA MADE & OWNED** **DERMATOLOGICALLY TESTED** **VEGAN FRIENDLY**

1. Kristina Liu, Banishing dry winter skin [Internet]. Harvard Health Blog. Posted 2019. [Cited 2020 May 5]. Available from: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/banishing-dry-winter-skin-2019031416142>. 2. Greive K. Cleansers and moisturisers: the basics. Wound Practice & Research. Journal of the Australian Wound Management Association. 2015;23:76.

Shop for a good cause

As a social enterprise, the income we make is invested back into the vital services we provide to help people with disabilities. **Your purchases help us to enhance people's lives.**

Depend MEN NIGHT DEFENCE

- 12** Designed for up to 12 hours leakproof protection in any sleeping position
- Multi-layer absorbent system absorbs both leaks and odour
- Looks, fits and feels like real underwear
- Superior Protection vs an incontinence pad*

* CUT Study, 2023; 105 participants agree Depend RealFit provides better protection than incontinence pads
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optimummedical®

optilube™
active

Containing local anaesthetic (Lidocaine 2%) and antiseptic (Chlorhexidine Gluconate 0.05%)

Brought to you by Optimum Medical

At **Optimum Medical** we believe in choice. Which is why we offer a range of catheterisation jelly pre-filled syringes, designed specifically for use during catheterisation procedures. All our syringes are supplied sterile and designed to fall from their packaging onto a sterile field, supporting an aseptic technique.



optilube™
active CHG free

Containing local anaesthetic (Lidocaine 2%). Ideally suited for patients with a contraindication or sensitivity to Chlorhexidine Gluconate (CHG).



Product Code	Stock Code	Description	EA Price 1 Unit	Carton Price 10 Units
1160	32000085	6ml syringe	\$9.60	\$96.0
1161	32000090	11ml syringe	\$10.30	\$103.0

Product Code	Stock Code	Description	EA Price 1 Unit	Carton Price 10 Units
1167	32000095	6ml syringe	\$9.60	\$96.0
1168	32000105	11ml syringe	\$10.30	\$103.0

- Each available in 6ml (female) and 11ml (male)
- Provided in a familiar and recommended syringe format
- Rounded tip for comfort when inserted into the urethra
- Latex-free

To request a free sample or place an order, you can email us on customerservice@independenceaustralia.com or call our customer service team on **1300 788 855**

OIMS-MP-9100-Mar24



All Day & All Night Kids Protection



XS All-In-One
1550mls
40 - 70cm
5501025140-01

Comfy Junior Slip

8-15 years
1325mls
24-47kgs
5501245140-02

Comfy Junior Pants

4-7 years
1150mls
17-27kgs
5501135140-02

Comfy Junior Pants

XS
1300mls
50-70cm
5531065141-01

iD Pants Plus



5/5 ♥♥♥♥♥
Amazing quality, easy to use. Makes life so much easier.
Natasha B.

5/5 ♥♥♥♥♥
Brilliant for my autistic 6 year old they never leak and fits perfectly for day and night.
Kelly R.

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TENA PROSKIN FLEX INCONTINENCE BRIEFS



Better Care for Everyone.

UNIQUE BELT DESIGN FOR EASY APPLICATION AND A BETTER FIT

GOOD FOOD FOR A GOOD MOOD

A healthy and nourishing diet fuels your mind and body to cope with everyday stresses, fight off illness, and keep your system running on the right sustenance.

Feeding your body with nutrient-rich foods as part of a well-balanced diet has so many benefits.

- Helps maintain a healthy weight.
- Stronger immune system.
- Reduces the risk of colds and flu.
- Consistent energy levels.
- Improved sleep patterns.
- Balanced hormones.
- Stabilised moods and emotional regulation.

Providing your body with foods rich in vitamin D will have positive impacts on all aspects of your overall wellbeing. Here are our essential foods for a health body and mind.

Fish

Rich in omega 3, fish is a great option to help provide the brain with all the important chemicals needed to improve concentration and function.

Fruit

Packed with antioxidants and provides the body with bacteria fighting functions and improved immunity.

Vegetables

Leafy greens are an excellent source of nutrients to improve iron levels, skin health and keeping you energised all at the same time.

Whole Grains

Essential for fibre and keeping the good gut bacteria working in your body to improve your brain function and increase your happy hormones.

Water

Staying hydrated and consuming at least 1.5 litres a day helps with consistent blood flow and regulation of your body temperature.

Watch your mind and body function improve with just a few small improvements!



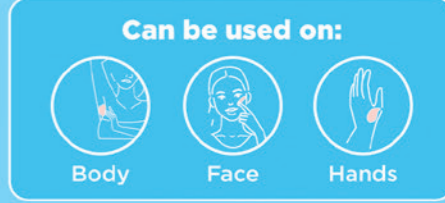
Have you visited our Nutrition Hub?

Click here or on the QR code to visit your one-stop-shop for expert information on nutrition, health and wellbeing and managing a healthy diet.



Introducing the latest innovation in personal care from **Dermal Therapy**

- ✓ 48hr sweat protection
- ✓ 100% natural actives for pore shrinking, not pore blocking
- ✓ No white marks
- ✓ Fragrance-free
- ✓ Aluminium free anti-perspirant



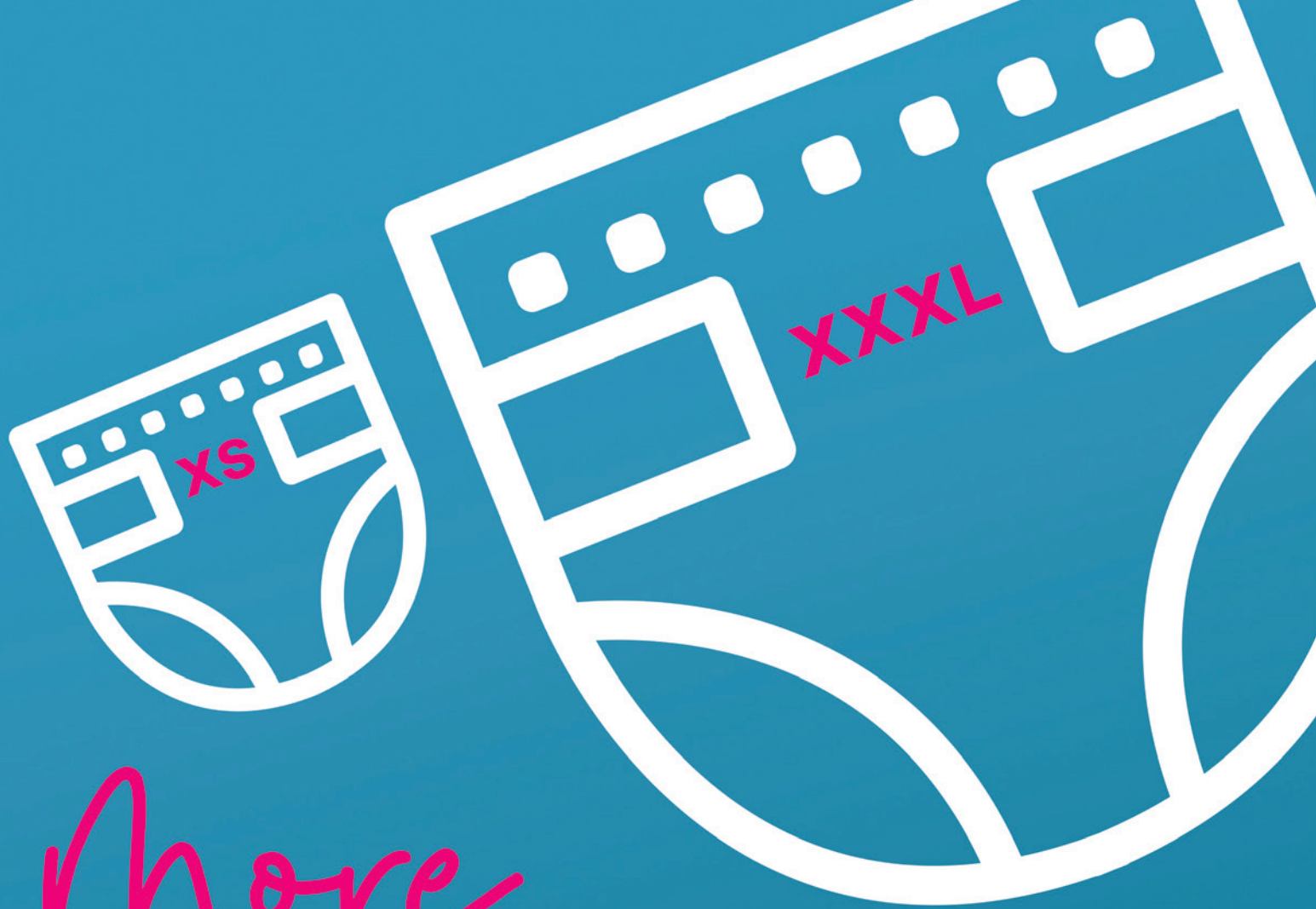
Find out more about Dermal Therapy's latest innovation.

[CLICK HERE](#)



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More sizes

Not everything you need is available from your local retailer. Don't settle for what's just on the shelf.

Get the right fit with sizes from XS to 3XL, Junior to Adult, Unisex to Male or Female, boxers to full briefs, King Single to King size. Everyday continence products are available in more sizes and fits for you or your loved ones.

Visit store.independenceaustralia.com
or call 1300 788 855



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