

Learning About Changing Adult Underwear

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If the person you're caring for has incontinence (trouble controlling urine or stool), they may need to wear adult protective underwear. This underwear helps absorb urine and catch stool. It can be either washable or disposable.

What should you know about changing the underwear?

- Always wash your hands well before and after each underwear change. Have the person you're caring for wash their hands too.
- Have the person change out of the adult underwear as soon as possible after it becomes soiled or wet. Let them do as much as they can on their own but give help when needed.
- Leave the underwear off and let the area dry for 5 to 10 minutes after each change if possible, but keep the person covered to help them feel more comfortable.
- If the person uses cloth or washable underwear, wash them in the warmest temperature recommended on the labels. Use mild detergent and rinse them twice. Do not use bleach or fabric softeners.
- If the person uses cloth underwear, try using a breathable cover that will help to prevent leaks.

The person may get a rash in the genital area, especially if that area doesn't get cleaned well. Rashes can occur when the skin stays wet, rubs against the underwear, or comes into contact with urine and stool. The skin may look red, raw, or burned. Some people also may be allergic to the perfumes in the underwear material.

Clean the groin area daily, and check for irritated skin and rashes so that you can treat them as soon as they happen.

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information call Health Link at 811.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patientEd>

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