

Washable absorbent underwear

Washable absorbent underwear offers a practical and dignified solution. They contain a sewn-in absorbent pad which absorbs and traps urine (wee) effectively. This contains antimicrobial fibres that reduce odour-causing bacteria. They are designed for comfort and protection, these garments provide reliable protection, reduce waste, and help you maintain your confidence and independence.

What are the benefits?

- **Discreet and comfortable:** looks and feels like normal underwear, ensuring discreet protection, made from soft breathable antimicrobial fibre ensuring maximum comfort and protection.
- **Washable and reusable:** designed to be washed and reused offering an eco-friendly and cost-effective solution.
- **Sustainability and reduction in waste:** an estimated three billion disposable adult and children's products are thrown away every year in the UK, accounting for 2-3% of all household waste. These products help to reduce waste and CO2 emissions through reduction in deliveries and reduction in methane emissions.
- **Skin health:** made from a breathable material allowing perspiration to evaporate from the skin, which helps keep the skin cooler and minimising the conditions for skin maceration and break down. Silver ion impregnated fibres in the garment inhibits bacterial growth helping to control odour.
- **Comfort:** sized to fit and are moulded to body contours. They are woven without rigid seams or pressure points. The feel and comfort are the same as ordinary underwear.
- **Convenience:** wear and launder as you would normal underwear. Multiple use means less storage space required and last up to 200 washes.
- **Security and freedom:** wearing normal fitting underwear that helps manage leaks. It fits and functions as normal underwear, so there's no worry about public perception.

Frequently asked Questions

Should I wash them before wearing them for the first time?

Yes, when you receive your washable absorbent underwear, you should wash the garment once before wearing.

Do they need to be washed at high temperatures?

Wash in cold or warm water with mild detergent, avoid bleach or fabric softeners to maintain the absorbency and quality of the fabric.

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Can they be tumble dried?

Tumble dry on low heat or air dry. High heat can damage the absorbent properties and elastic. They can be washed around 200 times. Ensure they are thoroughly dry before wearing.

Are they less absorbent than disposable products?

Washable underwear has a slightly lower absorbency than disposable products. If you have light to moderate incontinence, then a suitable washable/reusable product can be found. If your symptoms are more severe then a disposable product may be more suitable.

Are they hygienic?

Yes, cleaning washable underwear, following the manufacturer's washing guide provided with each product, will mean that they are perfectly hygienic for reuse. They contain antimicrobial fibres that reduce odour-causing bacteria. For care homes, individual laundry bags for washing machines are available.

Can they be used at night?

Yes.

Can you mix disposable and washable underwear?

This will be discussed as part of your clinical assessment and individual needs.

What happens if I am suitable for washable underwear?

A sample of a washable absorbent underwear will be sent to you to try. You will then be contacted for feedback on your experience and if the underwear is suitable, we will process an order for four additional washable products to be delivered to you.

That will be your annual allocation.

What size will I need?

It is important that you get the right size for you. The underwear should provide a snug fit to maximise protection.

- Women – it is recommended to use the hip size
- Men – it is recommended to use the waist size
- Children – it is recommended use the waist size

Is there support available for increased water usage/costs?

Depending on individual circumstances, there could be help available – please visit the Citizens Advice website www.citizensadvice.org.uk and search 'WaterSure scheme'.

If you require more information or assistance, please contact:

Wirral Bladder and Bowel Service **0151 514 2222**, select option 1.

Or email wchc.continence@nhs.net

If you would like this information in another format or language, please contact the Your Experience Team on freephone 0800 694 5530. Alternatively you can email wcnt.yourexperience@nhs.net

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