Homemade Male Incontinence Pouch

Avelino R. Lafrades

An estimated 13 million Americans of all ages suffer from urinary incontinence (UI), a condition that decreases quality of life, lowers self-esteem, and leads to a loss of independence and dignity (Gallo & Staskin, 1997). Many patients do not report UI to health care professionals because they are too ashamed or embarrassed to seek help. Others are unaware that treatment is available, or skeptical that treatment can help.

Urinary incontinence, or loss of bladder control, is not a disease but rather a symptom of an underlying condition. The inability to control the storage or release of urine ranges in severity from minor leakage (a few drops) with coughing, laughing, or sneezing, to the much more serious problem of complete bladder emptying with or without warning.

Most health care providers agree that surgery, medication, and behavioral modification are the major treatment options for UI. Among patients, the use of absorbent products is the most common method of managing UI (Baker & Norton, 1996). Although the use of these products is often viewed negatively because it may lead to a delay in seeking treatment, many persons with urinary incontinence rely on protective padding to provide a sense of security which enables them to lead more active social lives (Bierwirth, 1992).

Health care professionals should recognize the importance of using absorbent products as both a primary and supplemental technique for managing UI while treatment is in progress. As a registered nurse specializing in urology at the Long Beach Veterans Administration Medical Center, I come in contact with many patients (mostly male) with urinary incontinence. Quite a few of them have resorted to wearing diapers and complain that they are too bulky and hot. I recognized the need for an alternative and have developed a male incontinence pouch made from ALWAYS With Wings®, a female sanitary napkin. Table 1 and Figures 1-6 provide directions for converting an ALWAYS with Wings napkin into a male incontinence pouch.

This homemade male incontinence pouch provides discreet comfort, reliable protection, and a cost-effective solution for men who experience light to moderate urinary incontinence. It fits comfortably over the penis and is easy to use. It has two long adhesive strips to hold and secure the

Table 1.
How to Use the Male Incontinence Pouch

1. Open wrapper but do not remove the sanitary napkin.
2. Spread the sanitary napkin, including the wings, out on a firm surface.
3. Fold the sanitary napkin halfway; bottom up to the top level of the wings.
4. Take one of the wings and fold it inward and over the napkin where the adhesive strips are and press it down firmly.
5. Take the other wing and repeat Step 4.
6. Remove the sanitary napkin from the wrapper. You now have a male incontinence pouch.

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Editor’s Note: “The Homemade Male Incontinence Pouch” won first place in the Pearls competition at the 1998 SUNA Annual Conference in San Diego, CA.
Figure 1. Open wrapper but do not remove sanitary napkin.

Figure 2. Spread the sanitary napkin, including wings, out on a firm surface.

Figure 3. Fold the sanitary napkin halfway; bottom up to top level of wings.

Figure 4. Take one of the wings and fold it inward and over the napkin where the adhesive strips are and press it down firmly.

Figure 5. Take the other wing and repeat Step 4.

Figure 6. Remove the sanitary napkin from the wrapper. You now have a male incontinence pouch.
pouch in place in a regular brief. The waterproof backing prevents leakage and odor and it can absorb between 20 cc to 70 cc of urine. I recommend using this pouch after cystoscopy and diagnostic procedures such as retrograde urethrogram, voiding cystourothrogram and cystogram, or after removal of a Foley catheter. The ALWAYS with Wings napkin costs between 17 to 25 cents per pad. It is available in light, medium, heavy, and overnight protection. I recommend using heavy protection for light leakage, and overnight protection for moderate leakage. It will be necessary to use a larger absorbent product for heavy leakage.

It is important for nurses to be familiar with the absorbent products used for UI so that we can offer patients guidance in choosing the product that is best for them. It is also important for us to continue to use our problem-solving skills and creativity to develop unique ways to assist patients in managing quality of life problems such as urinary incontinence.

References