

Toileting Assistance Programmes (TAPs)

KATE BOYCE: In my current role, which I've been doing for nearly three years, I support other health care professionals and advise them. I also deliver a lot of training and the message about bowels that I always try and get across is that it's really important to sit on the toilet at regular intervals, after breakfast, after other meals if after breakfast doesn't work and try and get into the routine of doing this, because it works.

The other important thing is to make sure the person is sitting in a good position to have their bowels open, so knees higher than hips, leaning forward, feet flat on a stool or a cushion or something so that the body is in the most natural position to have the bowels open and the bowel will empty as opposed to emptying a bit and then having some leakage later on in the day. So those two things are so important.

Establishing a bowel routine and making sure the person is in the right position. If somebody is needing support to get to the toilet then that is always going to be a problem, especially if the person that is helping them doesn't get them at the toilet at the right time. You don't want to be faecally incontinent sitting with faeces in a continence pad, it's very uncomfortable and it's very bad for the skin. The best treatment always is to start trying to get someone into a routine.

There are lots of other ways to treat it, but if you can get somebody into a routine where they're going to the toilet soon after meals, when they're most

likely to have their bowels open it can make a huge difference to that, and help to perhaps not completely cure them but it can certainly help to improve their symptoms.