

Risk factors

Smoking and obesity are modifiable risk factors for faecal incontinence.

Risk factors specific for women include:

Prior traumatic vaginal delivery

- Menopause

In men, risk factors include:

- Evacuatory dysfunction
- Prior surgery for haemorrhoids
- Radiation for prostate cancer

Causes

Maintaining continence requires the interaction of an intact and functional anal sphincter complex, anorectal sensation and rectal capacity, the consistency of the faeces (ideally formed but not hard), adequate cognitive ability and physical mobility, and bowel motility. Any impairment of these elements can result in incontinence. Faecal incontinence can have multiple causes and can arise from a complex interplay of

