

Take care

A practical guide to bladder management

10 tips from nurses

Small things you can do every day

How to clean your hands

Get a thorough hand washing and sanitizing guide

Meet users: Ralph and Dina

How a routine gave them freedom



Coloplast
Care

Why having a healthy bladder matters

Many people don't think much about their bladder until issues arise or it stops working properly, but a healthy and well-functioning bladder are important components of overall health.

How to improve bladder health? There are lots of answers to this question, but the most common one is: you need to control your bladder – not the other way around. Although there is no instant way to improve bladder management, there are many small things you can do to make a big impact, like establishing a consistent routine. This booklet will teach you 10 simple tips to help improve your bladder routine and will guide you through proper hygiene practices that you can start using in everyday life. Intermittent catheter users Ralph and Dina will also share their bladder management experience and best practices for integrating it into their lifestyle.

No matter where you're at in your bladder management journey, we're here to help you live life using catheters.

You can contact us for product and lifestyle support:



1-866-226-6362



care-us@coloplast.com

The Coloplast Care team



Information from Coloplast Care is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to substitute for professional medical advice and should not be interpreted to contain treatment recommendations. You should rely on the healthcare professional who knows your individual history for personal medical advice and diagnosis.



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“As a catheter user, it is especially important to have a healthy bladder, as it reduces the risk of UTIs and general discomfort.”

MICHELLE*

BLADDER
HEALTH

Bladder health – why is it important?

As a catheter user, it's important to keep your bladder healthy. But why? We asked a nurse to explain the importance of bladder health.

Why should you be interested in bladder health?

As a catheter user, it is especially important to have a healthy bladder, because it reduces the risk of developing urinary tract infections (UTIs) and general discomfort. Maintaining control of your bladder is much easier when it is healthy.

What is a healthy bladder?

A healthy bladder is emptied regularly and completely, so that all waste is flushed out. There is a risk of developing a UTI if the bladder isn't emptied completely or often enough, since stagnant urine in the bladder creates an environment where bacteria can grow.¹

How does the bladder become unhealthy?

There can be several reasons that a bladder may become unhealthy, like not emptying the bladder often enough or completely, insufficient fluid intake, or improper hygiene practices.

Is having a healthy bladder important for both men and women?

Yes. A healthy bladder significantly increases quality of life for everyone.

Which catheter users benefit most from a healthy bladder?

All catheter users benefit from a healthy bladder because it may reduce discomfort, incontinence, and infection. For some, a healthy bladder restores their independence.

What can I do to develop and maintain a healthy bladder?

There are many steps you can take to develop better bladder health, like drinking enough fluids, emptying your bladder

regularly and completely, and maintaining good hygiene.^{1,2} This booklet will teach you best practices that are generally applicable to catheter users but it's important to note that each situation is unique, and tailored product and lifestyle support is available through your Coloplast Care Advisor.

How do I know if my bladder is unhealthy?

The most common sign that your bladder is unhealthy is developing a UTI. However, there are other signs and symptoms that may indicate bladder issues or a UTI.



COMMON SIGNS OF AN UNHEALTHY BLADDER²

- Pain in the bladder area above the pelvic bone
- Dark, cloudy or concentrated urine
- Increased urgency to urinate not caused by larger fluid intake
- Unexplained change in the amount of urine
- Blood in urine
- Unexpected urine leakage
- Foul smelling urine

The symptoms above may also indicate other diseases, and so we always recommend contacting your clinician if you experience any of these symptoms.

1. Kennelly M, Thiruchelvam N., et al. Adult Neurogenic Lower Urinary Tract Dysfunction and Intermittent Catheterisation in a Community Setting: Risk Factors Model for Urinary Tract Infections. *Advances in Urology*. Sponsored by Coloplast. 2019

2. Medical Student Curriculum: Adult UTI. (2020). American Urological Association. www.auanet.org/education/auauniversity/for-medical-students/medical-students-curriculum/medical-student-curriculum/adult-uti



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“I have realized that structure isn’t a limitation. Quite the contrary, I get the freedom to live my life the way I want, when I have a solid routine.”

RALPH*

*Coloplast has compensated this user to share their catheter product experience. Each person’s situation is unique so your experience may not be the same. Talk to your doctor about whether this product is right for you.

Ralph avoids structure – but having a consistent routine gives him freedom

With the rudder in one hand and a catheter in the other, it's full speed ahead! Ralph Bramsen Eriksen has sailed most of his life and is an optimist, despite his bladder giving him headwind. This sailor has developed a consistent bladder management routine resulting in fewer urinary tract infections.

Ralph proudly shows off his boat, which has been voted the most beautiful of its kind in Denmark. 62-year-old Ralph has been sailing for 34 years, and the length of the boat, which is just over 26 feet, is nothing compared to the container ships he captained in his younger years working as a shipmaster for a large shipping company. Container freight requires exact logistics, planning, and predictability, while Ralph prefers spontaneity and doesn't like to be limited by routine.

"I would be able to board and be told that six months later - on the fifth of June at 12:34 a.m. - we would arrive at the port of Los Angeles, offload so and so many containers and leave the harbor at 6:38 p.m. And that's exactly what happened," Ralph said.

"It was like being in prison voluntarily." Seeking more flexibility, Ralph quit his job as a captain and became a freelance skipper for Americans who needed their boats sailed from one port to another. After 17 years as a freelance skipper, Ralph founded his own advertising agency in Denmark before

eventually returning to the sea. This time, he and his wife, Lone, started the Southern Cross - a project that taught struggling youth how to sail the seas. Today, Ralph continues to pay it forward and works as a teacher.

Blow to the head with a hammer

Despite his adventurous life on the water, Ralph has been affected by incontinence issues he has experienced since he was young.

"I always urinated frequently but I never emptied my bladder. I only really let out the worst of the pressure, so today my bladder looks like this," said Ralph while relaxing his hand loosely, depicting a deformed and lax bladder.

He was diagnosed with incontinence two years ago after being admitted to the hospital because he was in pain and couldn't urinate. This was also when he was told that he would be using intermittent catheters for the rest of his life.

"It was like a blow to the head with a hammer. Half a year before that I had been told that at some point, I would no longer be



able to walk because of my back injury. And now I would have to use a catheter too,” Ralph said. “We live in our dream home, and now I was going to be semi-disabled. At least that’s how it felt. In the beginning, I made fun of it but that was my defense mechanism, but I was actually really upset.”

Talking about it became a turning point

Ralph contacted Coloplast Denmark and was enrolled in the Coloplast Care program, so his personal Advisor reached out to him to discuss his bladder management routine.

“In the beginning I refused to accept the telephone calls. I didn’t feel like talking about it. When you don’t open the envelope, you can’t see the bill,” Ralph said. “I also had a hard time talking about intimate things with a Care Advisor. But she was persistent and kept calling and asking about my urination, and at some point, she then started to give me lifestyle advice based on my answers: that it shouldn’t hurt when I inserted the catheter, and that there should be no blood in the urine.”

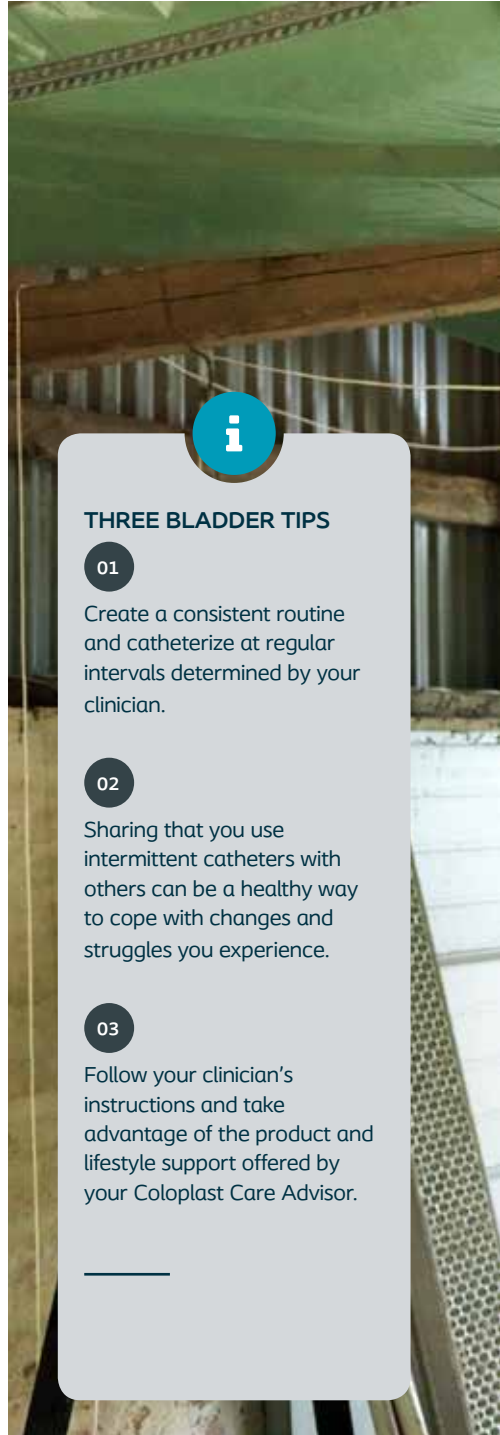
“That was exactly what I needed to hear. I was brought up to believe that if you break your leg, you wait a couple of weeks before going to see a doctor, just to see if it goes away by itself. But now there was a person at the other end of the line who kept telling me I shouldn’t be experiencing any problems, so slowly I began to think, ‘Well - that really makes a lot of sense,’” Ralph said. “She carried on until I had the right catheter that fit me. The conversations also made me feel much better, mentally. It was exactly all the practical things I needed to talk about, because I couldn’t talk to my wife about it. At the same time, I also realized that I was not the only one in the world who had to use a catheter. That is how you feel when you are down in a hole, psychologically. So, the conversations became a turning point for me.”

Learning structure

It was the Coloplast Care Advisor - as well as his clinician - who slowly but surely taught Ralph how to master intermittent catheterization.

Ralph’s nurse looked for ways to easily integrate catheterization into his lifestyle, like setting alarms to remind him to catheterize regularly.

“I politely replied that it sounded like a good idea,



THREE BLADDER TIPS

01

Create a consistent routine and catheterize at regular intervals determined by your clinician.

02

Sharing that you use intermittent catheters with others can be a healthy way to cope with changes and struggles you experience.

03

Follow your clinician’s instructions and take advantage of the product and lifestyle support offered by your Coloplast Care Advisor.





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“If I am at the fridge aisle at the supermarket when the phone beeps, I use the customer toilet and catheterize.”

RALPH*

*Coloplast has compensated this user to share their catheter product experience. Each person's situation is unique, so your experience may not be the same. Talk to your doctor about whether this product is right for you.



but at the same time my brain said she could forget about that,” Ralph said. “I didn’t need to be controlled by anything. I hate structure.”

To give an example, Ralph grabbed he and his wife’s shared calendar and noted that his column would be empty unless Lone added something. But three consecutive urinary tract infections caused Ralph to reconsider having some structure.

“I started setting a regular alarm on my mobile phone for 12 p.m., because I sometimes forgot about that catheterization,” Ralph said.

Shortly after, Ralph added more reminders because his clinician observed a high volume of urine after catheterizing. To keep the volume within an ideal range, Ralph needed to catheterize 5-6 times a day.

“Now, all of the times are in the mobile phone,” said Ralph, who consistently catheterizes when the alarm goes off.

“If I am at the fridge aisle at the supermarket when the phone beeps, I use the customer toilet and catheterize,” Ralph said. “Recently I was at a birthday party for one of my grandchildren, and I had to ask if we could please wait with the birthday song until after I had been to the

bathroom. Everyone is fine with it because my family and friends know how important this is for me. The disadvantage of structure to me is that if I don’t do it as soon as the alarm sounds, I easily forget about it until the next alarm goes off.”

Over the years, Ralph has become more comfortable sharing that he uses intermittent catheters and has become known for more than just his sailing skills. “I had a special wetsuit made that has a velcro opening down below. So when we race, I am able to sit with the rudder in one hand and catheterize with the other,” Ralph said.

“I’ve always lived under a lucky star and taken things as they come. So, I am actually quite proud of myself. I have realized that structure isn’t a limitation. Quite the contrary, I get the freedom to live my life the way I want, when I have a solid routine.” ●



“I started setting a regular alarm on my mobile phone for 12 p.m., because I sometimes forgot about that catheterization.”

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The bladder is part of the urinary tract, which consists of:



3 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE BLADDER:

01

The bladder is both a storage site for urine and a muscle that contracts as the bladder empties.

02

The bladder is not constantly hollow or distended. It is a bag-like muscle that stretches and expands as it becomes full.

03

If the bladder is functioning normally, you will feel the urge to urinate before the bladder is completely full. Individuals with neurogenic bladder may not actually feel an urge to urinate. Catheterizing on a regular schedule is important because it prevents exceeding a normal capacity of urine.

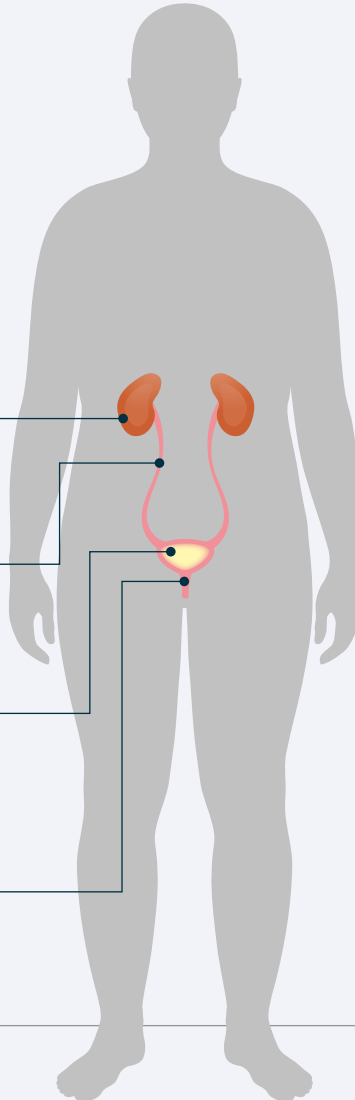


The kidneys, which filter out waste and produce urine

The ureters, which direct the urine from the kidneys to the bladder

The bladder, which stores and empties the urine

The urethra, the channel urine passes through before leaving the body



Are you worried about urinary tract infections?

As a clean intermittent catheter (CIC) user, you may develop urinary tract infections (UTIs) occasionally. UTIs are a common and well-known issue for many catheter users. If you are worried or feel uncertain about how to reduce your risk of UTIs, you're not alone. Understanding what a UTI is and how you can reduce the risk of developing one can help you maintain bladder health.

What is a UTI?

A UTI is an infection in the urinary tract, which includes the kidneys, ureters, bladder and urethra (see illustration on the left page). Most infections occur in the bladder.

How do you get a UTI?

A UTI can occur for different reasons. If you don't have any symptoms and have a healthy bladder, the presence of some bacteria in the urinary tract does not necessarily cause a urinary tract infection. However, if the bacteria grow and multiply excessively, or urine is stored in the bladder for too long, it may cause an infection in the urinary tract that needs to be treated.

Who can get a UTI?

Anybody can get a UTI, but there is a higher risk if you are a catheter user. This is because bacteria, potentially left behind after improper hand washing

or is present near the urethral opening, can be introduced into the urinary tract during catheterization. Not emptying your bladder completely or often enough can also increase the likelihood of getting a UTI, because each time you catheterize, you remove urine along with lingering bacteria from the body. It's important to regularly flush out and drain the bladder completely, because stagnant urine provides an environment for bacteria to multiply.¹

How do I know if I have a UTI?

If you have any of the signs and symptoms of a potential UTI, you may need medical attention. However, you might not feel pain or bladder irritation if the nerves to your bladder have been affected by an underlying medical condition. Remember, a UTI will only be diagnosed when you have both symptoms and bacteria in the urine. If you have any symptoms, you should

1. Kennelly M, Thiruchelvam N., et al. Adult Neurogenic Lower Urinary Tract Dysfunction and Intermittent Catheterisation in a Community Setting: Risk Factors Model for Urinary Tract Infections. *Advances in Urology*. Sponsored by Coloplast. 2019





always consult your healthcare provider immediately to get the appropriate diagnosis and treatment.

How can I manage and minimize the risk of UTIs?

There is a lot you can do to minimize the chances of developing a UTI. There are three key points to remember:

01

Use a clean technique when you catheterize.

02

Empty your bladder completely and regularly throughout the day.

03

Stay hydrated. 6 to 8 glasses of water per day is recommended for most people, but consult your healthcare provider to determine what amount is best for you.

Catheterizing hygienically can be difficult to manage sometimes – especially if you are away from home or not feeling well. Following the routine your nurse has showed you is very important and will support correct catheterization every time. In addition to this, however, there are some simple ways you can help to make the process easier, wherever you are. ●



Potential UTI symptoms:²

- Fever
- Pain in the bladder area above the pelvic bone
- Increased urgency to urinate
- Chills
- Low back and/or flank pain
- Increased spasms of the legs, abdomen, or bladder
- Dark-colored and strong-smelling urine
- Blood in urine
- Unexpected urine leakage or leaking between catheterizations
- Increased episodes of Autonomic Dysreflexia (AD) for individuals with a spinal cord injury
- Lethargy
- Cloudy urine
- Altered mental status

2. Medical Student Curriculum: Adult UTI. (2020). American Urological Association. www.auanet.org/education/auniversity/for-medical-students/medical-students-curriculum/medical-student-curriculum/adult-uti

Washing and hand sanitizing go hand-in-hand

Good hand hygiene is essential prior to, and after intermittent catheterization. Wash your hands for 40 to 60 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.^{3,4}

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) may develop when bacteria is introduced into the urinary tract during catheterization, so it's important to properly wash your hands before catheterizing. Clinicians agree that the biggest challenge is developing good habits. While catheter users are trained on proper technique by their clinician, they may return to bad habits when they go home.

“Why does it have to take so long?”

This is the most common question about hand hygiene. Clinicians say that besides not touching the catheter itself, the most important step is taking time to wash or sanitize hands properly. If you are in a place where you can't wash your hands, try to use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.⁴

When it comes to intimate hygiene and ensuring the

area around the urethra is clean before catheterization, clinicians recommend cleaning the meatus (urethral opening) every time you catheterize.⁵ Clean the entire urethral opening with warm, soapy water with a clean washcloth or towelette.⁵ Reusing the same towelette can spread germs, so only use them once. Intimate soap can help maintain the acidic environment that keeps your skin healthy.

To clean a penis: The foreskin of uncircumcised/intact penises needs to be retracted prior to cleaning and catheter insertion. Gently clean the head of the penis with soap and water or a moist towelette and use a circular motion, starting at the urethra. Never wash back and forth over the urethral opening.

To clean a vulva: Separate the labia and gently clean the area around the urethral opening using soap and water or a moist towelette. Wipe from front to back (urethra toward anus) and never go back and forth across the urethral opening.⁶ ●



3. World Health Organization. How to Handwash? May 2009. https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/patient-safety/how-to-handwash-poster.pdf?sfvrsn=7004a09d_2#:~:text=Rotational%20rubbing%20of%20left%20thumb,Your%20hands%20are%20now%20safe.

4. World Health Organization. WHO guidelines on hand hygiene in health care. WHO Press, Geneva, Switzerland. 2009. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241597906>.

5. Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates. Intermittent Self-Catheterization Patient Fact Sheet. 2019

6. Hand hygiene is imperative since IC is a “clean technique”. Please see page 105, Section 15: Newman, DK. (2021) Intermittent Self-Catheterization Patient Education Checklist. Urologic Nursing, 41(2), 97-109. <https://doi.org/10.7257/1053-816X.2021.41.2.97>



How to clean your hands³

HAND WASH



Wet your hands with cold or lukewarm water - it will protect your hands - and then apply soap.



Rub the soap thoroughly so it foams.



Rub the back of your hands and between the fingers.



Rub palm to palm with fingers interlaced.



Wash your thumbs.



Wash your fingers, fingertips, and under the nails.

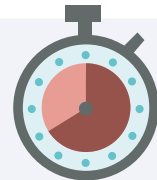


Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers. Then, rinse hands with water.



Turn off the tap with the back of your hand (if possible) and wipe your hands with a clean hand towel.

It is the process of rubbing your hands against each other that removes the bacteria. The whole washing process should take at least 40 seconds.³



40-60 sec.



Bonus info! Use washcloths or cut a large towel into smaller pieces and use it only once to dry your hands—since towels often provide a home for bacteria.⁷ If that isn't possible, have a personal towel that you wash regularly and only you use.

3. World Health Organization. How to Handwash? May 2009. https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/patient-safety/how-to-handwash-poster.pdf?sfvrsn=7004a09d_2#:~:text=Rotational%20rubbing%20of%20left%20thumb,Your%20hands%20are%20now%20safe.
7. Gerba, C. P., Tamimi, A. H., Maxwell, S., Sifuentes, L. Y., Hoffman, D. R., & Koenig, D. W. (2014). Bacterial occurrence in kitchen hand towels. Food Protection Trends, 34(5), 312-317.

HAND DISINFECTION⁸



Pour half-tablespoon of hand sanitizer or gel onto your hands.



It must be enough so that you can rub your hands for 30 seconds before they dry.



Rub the hand sanitizer into your hands.



Rub the sanitizer on the back of your hands and between the fingers.



Rub palm to palm with fingers interlaced.



Rub hand sanitizer on your thumbs.



Rub hand sanitizer on your fingertips and under the nails.

What to do if you cannot wash your hands before catheterization?

It's important to disinfect your hands with hand sanitizer if you can't wash them with soap and water.

It is the process of rubbing your hands against each other that removes the bacteria. The whole process should take about 30 seconds.



30 sec.



Bonus info! Your hand sanitizer should contain at least 60% alcohol (ethanol) to ensure that the bacteria are killed, and glycerol to prevent irritated and dry skin.⁴

4. World Health Organization. WHO guidelines on hand hygiene in health care. WHO Press, Geneva, Switzerland. 2009.<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241597906>.

8. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. When and How to Wash Your Hands. March 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>. accessed 09/21/2022

A consistent routine may reduce the risk of urinary tract infections

Dina Hvidgaard was born with spina bifida and neurogenic bladder and uses intermittent catheters to manage the condition. But several urinary tract infections (UTIs) spurred her to develop a consistent catheterization routine.

Dina Hvidgaard was diagnosed with hidden spina bifida when she was 10 years old. While her peers were out of diapers, Dina couldn't control her bladder, so her clinician offered surgery to make her urethra tighter.

"It stopped the incontinence, but I had to start using intermittent catheters," Dina said. She started off using long intermittent catheters that had to be placed in water before use.

"It was extremely impractical and hampered me a lot. If there was no water nearby, I needed to have a bottle of water with me, and when I was on holiday in the southern hemisphere, the catheter became as soft as spaghetti when the water in the tap or bottle was hot," Dina said.

"But I was young and didn't know any

better. So, it was only after a few years when I was at the hospital for a check-up that I asked if there might be a better catheter for me."

Dina was introduced to SpeediCath® Compact Female, which helped enable her to live life like any other teenager.

Urinary tract infections provided substance for reflection

Some people postpone or skip catheterization if it hurts or restricts their social life, which increases the risk of urinary tract infections.^{9,10} Dina, on the other hand, consistently followed her prescribed catheterization frequency, saying: there was no choice - it was essential. It wasn't always like this, though, and something triggered her to establish and stick to her bladder management schedule.



9. Wyndaele JJ. Complications of intermittent catheterization: their prevention and treatment. *Spinal Cord*. 2002; 40(10): 536-41.

10. Shekelle PG, Morton SC, Clark KA, Pathak M, Vickrey BG. Systematic review of risk factors for urinary tract infection in adults with spinal cord dysfunction. *J Spinal Cord Med*. 1999; 22(4): 258-72.



*“There is a clear correlation
between catheterizing
approximately every four hours
and urinary tract infections,
which are now rare.”*

DINA*



*Coloplast has compensated this user to share their catheter product experience. Each person's situation is unique so your experience may not be the same. Talk to your doctor about whether this product is right for you.



"A year and a half ago something happened. I started getting urinary tract infections, which otherwise had not been a problem since I got my SpeediCath® Compact catheter again. It got me thinking about whether there was something I could do differently," Dina said.

"It was many years ago that I was trained to use intermittent catheters, and I probably needed to brush up on my knowledge of bladder health. I decided to manage my catheterizations according to some fixed times during the day."

Dina catheterizes when she wakes up and then again at 9 a.m. when she gets to work. She catheterizes at lunch time, around 4 p.m., and in the evening before bed. If she wakes up during the night she catheterizes an additional time - and she's confident this routine has made a difference.

"There is a clear correlation between catheterizing approximately every four hours and urinary tract infections, which are now rare," Dina said. Dina's experience is supported by current Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates (SUNA) guidelines.⁵ ●



TWO GREAT TIPS

01

Create a realistic routine that you can remember easily. You can do this by linking it to other daily tasks you already do.

02

Drink sufficient fluids. You shouldn't avoid catheterization by drinking less.



"It was many years ago that I was trained to use intermittent catheters, and I probably needed to brush up on my knowledge of bladder health."

DINA

5. Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates. Intermittent Self-Catheterization Patient Fact Sheet. 2019.

Keeping a positive mindset

How do you deal with the news of having to use a catheter? Does it feel overwhelming? It's not unusual to experience a wave of fear, frustration, anger or sadness. This is normal - but don't let worrying get the best of you. While no one can avoid the negative feelings completely, a change in the way you think and feel about catheterization can have emotional benefits.

The power of positivity

Adjusting to intermittent catheterization can be challenging, and the changes you experience are not just physical, but emotional as well. Maintaining a positive attitude is probably the last thing on your mind. After all, how are you supposed to focus on positivity when so many things seem to be going wrong?

But shifting to a positive mindset and developing a more positive attitude might help you improve your overall mental health.

Developing a positive mindset might help you cope with any potential setbacks, rather than succumbing to feelings of sadness, worry and anxiety.

Tips and strategies

- **Take back control of your attitude:** Even if you can't change the circumstances of your life, you can change your attitude. Every time a negative thought enters your mind, replace it with a positive thought. What are you grateful for? What are some of the good things in your life?
- **Allow yourself mental breaks:** Try not to put pressure on yourself to feel a certain way or expect to feel like yourself again in a particular time frame. Whenever you feel stressed about your new situation, allow yourself to take a step back.



- **Stick to your routine:** Although it might feel overwhelming, it is important to maintain a consistent routine. When you stick to a daily routine, the 'when,' 'where,' and 'how' of catheterization becomes less worrying and you gain the freedom to pursue activities that are important to you.
- **Take control of your situation:** Take an active part in every decision concerning your bladder routine, from choosing products to setting boundaries around what you're ready for. This will lead to a greater sense of control – and make you feel stronger.
- **Celebrate small victories:** The more you focus on your wins, the better you'll feel. It's easy to get frustrated and focus on what you can't do when dealing with a chronic illness. Instead of ruminating on this, try flipping the script and think about all the things you've already done. There's no victory that's too small to celebrate.
- **Do something nice for yourself every day:** Make sure you're taking time for self-care every day. It can be as simple as spending five minutes sitting outside in the sunshine, writing in your journal, or reading a book. The most important thing is that you're doing something that makes you feel good.

You are (or will become) what you think you are, and practice makes perfect. If you feel overwhelmed, try one tip at a time. With time and persistence, your mind will eventually reject negative thoughts and welcome the positive ones. ●



How to develop a healthy bladder as a catheter user

As a catheter user, focusing on your bladder health can make a difference in your well-being. When your bladder is healthy, there is less risk of urinary tract infections, discomfort and pain.

To help you on your way to better bladder health, here are 10 clinician-validated tips for your bladder routine.

In general, proper hygiene, drinking enough fluids, and emptying the bladder completely and regularly are key components of bladder management. Adherence to a catheterization routine can also limit how much urine is stored in the bladder and prevent overstretching or bacterial growth.

These clinician-validated best practices are relevant to anyone who uses intermittent catheters.

However, all situations are individual, and if you need personalized product and lifestyle support, contact Coloplast Care at 1-866-226-6362. Telephone support from Coloplast Care is supplemental and does not replace advice from your clinician. If you experience acute discomfort, contact your clinician immediately.





Habits throughout the day



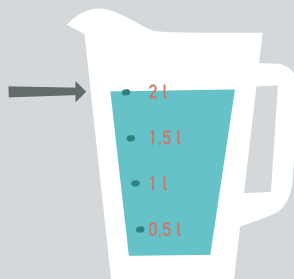
01

Have a plan

The most important aspect of developing a healthy bladder is having a plan - and the motivation to stick to it. You should plan to drink 6-8 glasses of water every day and empty your bladder every 4-6 hours.⁵

Why?

Emptying your bladder regularly and completely reduces the risk of excessive bacterial growth that could lead to a urinary tract infection. To get into a routine, consider putting a schedule on the fridge or setting alarms on your phone to remind you when to catheterize. Find a plan that works for you and if you need help, contact Coloplast Care at 1-866-226-6362.



02

Drink 6-8 glasses of water per day

Clinicians recommend drinking 6-8 glasses of water per day for most people. Consult your clinician to determine the amount of water that is best for you. Water is always the best choice of fluid for the bladder. Coffee, tea, alcohol, fizzy drinks and other beverages with caffeine, sugar or sweetener can irritate the bladder, so consume limited amounts of these.

Why?

When you are adequately hydrated, your urine becomes diluted and any bacteria are flushed out during catheterization.

03



Catheterize at night if necessary

It is important to catheterize at intervals that are nearly equidistant during the day and night to ensure that your bladder does not get too full.

If you drank a lot during the evening and cannot feel when you need to urinate, you should empty your bladder during the night so that there is not too much urine in your bladder for too long.

5. Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates. Intermittent Self-Catheterization Patient Fact Sheet. 2019.

Tips for your catheterization routine

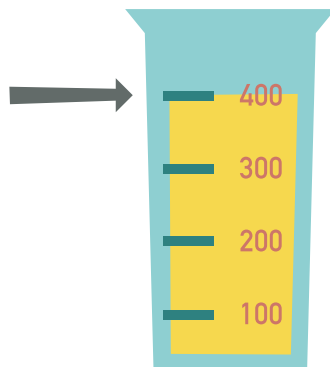
04

400-500 mL or 13-15 oz per urination⁵

As a rule of thumb, you should try to keep the amount of urine in your bladder under 400-500 mL or 13-15 ounces per urination to ensure your bladder is not overfull. If you are unsure about how much urine is released per catheterization, it may be a good idea to measure the amount in a measuring cup and note it in your bladder diary.

Why?

If you suppress the need to urinate and your bladder becomes frequently overdistended with urine, you may actually develop an underactive bladder. Underactive bladders lose the ability to sufficiently contract for complete bladder emptying. Overstretching of bladder walls results in weak bladder contraction, and the bladder can't squeeze with enough force to empty all of the urine. It is very important that you keep your bladder volumes consistently less than 400 - 500 mL or 13 - 15 ounces.



4-6 hours



05

Empty your bladder every 4-6 hours⁵

Getting into a routine of emptying your bladder every 4-6 hours is essential to a healthy bladder. Try not to skip any planned catheterizations to maintain your routine.

Why?

It is important to empty your bladder regularly so that urine does not remain in the bladder for too long. Old urine in the bladder is a breeding ground for bacteria that can lead to urinary tract infections.

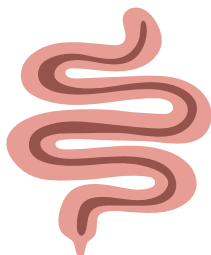
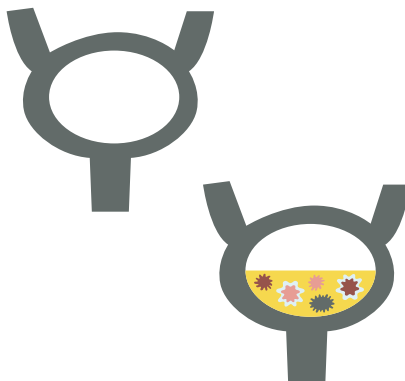
5. Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates. Intermittent Self-Catheterization Patient Fact Sheet. 2019.

Empty your bladder completely

Knowing whether you've let out every drop of urine is impossible, but it's important to empty the bladder as much as possible. To accomplish this, remove the catheter slowly and carefully once the bladder is emptied to remove urine that may be left over at the bottom of the bladder.

Why?

When the bladder is completely emptied regularly, urine does not stay in the bladder for such a long time. Every time you catheterize, you remove the urine and bacteria from your body, which can reduce the risk of urinary tract infections.



Take care of your gut

We've all heard the phrase: you are what you eat. But good gut health is also important to maintain a healthy bladder. A nutrient-dense, low-fat diet across all food groups (in recommended amounts within calorie limits) can help meet your nutritional needs.¹¹ A healthy diet, combined with at least two and a half hours of moderate physical activity per week (as allowed by your clinician), can help you gain substantial health benefits.¹² If you tend to develop constipation, consult your healthcare provider for recommendations.

Why?

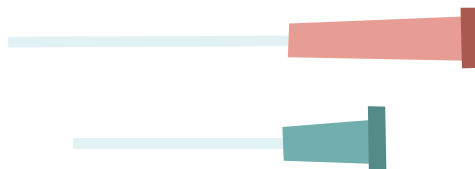
Constipation can affect your ability to empty your bladder completely because an overfilled bowel can put a strain on your bladder, contributing to developing urinary tract infections (UTIs), so focusing on good bowel function is important for preventing both issues.

Find the right catheter

Finding the right catheter can make all the difference in the world. Studies show that intermittent catheter users who are satisfied with their product are the most compliant, so it's important that you're comfortable with your prescribed product and it meets your needs.¹³ Talk to your healthcare provider about what product is best for you.

Why?

If something feels uncomfortable or limits our lifestyle, we tend to avoid it. The same goes for catheterization - so finding a product that fits your personal preference and lifestyle is critical. Remember that sometimes it takes a little trial and error before finding what works best for you, so consult your clinician to learn about catheter options.



11. United States Department of Agriculture. Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Ninth edition. December 2020. https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans_2020-2025.pdf
12. United States Department of Health and Human Services. Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. Second edition. 2018. https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf
13. Barbosa CD, Balp MM, Kulich K, Germain N, Rofail D. A literature review to explore the link between treatment satisfaction and adherence, compliance and persistence. Patient Preference and Adherence. 2012; 6: 39-48.

Focus on your hygiene

09

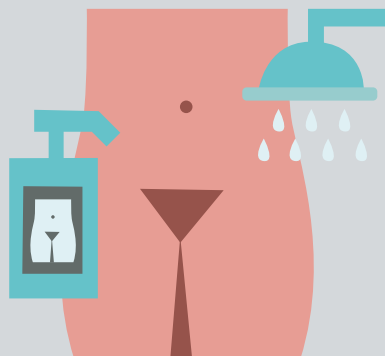
Maintain good intimate hygiene

Maintaining good intimate hygiene is a key component of your bladder routine. Clinicians recommend cleaning the urethral opening before each catheterization using soap and water or a waterless, alcohol-based hand rub or towelettes.⁵

See page 15 for detailed instructions on how to wash prior to catheterization.

Why?

UTIs may develop when bacteria - perhaps from the exterior urethral opening or is left behind after improper hand washing - are introduced into the urinary tract during catheterization, so it's important to maintain consistent hygiene practices.



10

Ensure good hand hygiene

Proper hand washing is one of the best ways to protect yourself against unwanted bacteria. Always wash your hands thoroughly before and after each catheterization using either soap and water or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.⁴ Even if you have washed your hands thoroughly, never touch the part of the catheter you insert into the urethra.

Why?

If you don't wash your hands, you risk transferring bacteria from your skin into your urethra, which can cause infections. If you can't insert the catheter without touching the sterile part, talk to your clinician about product options that are easier to guide or have a protective sleeve or gripper, and as a last resort use sterile, disposable gloves.



4. World Health Organization. WHO guidelines on hand hygiene in health care. WHO Press, Geneva, Switzerland. 2009.<https://www.who.int/publications/item/9789241597906>.

5. Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates. Intermittent Self-Catheterization Patient Fact Sheet. 2019

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