



Wellness education

The basics of intermittent self-catheterization



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*A valid prescription is required. Limitations apply.

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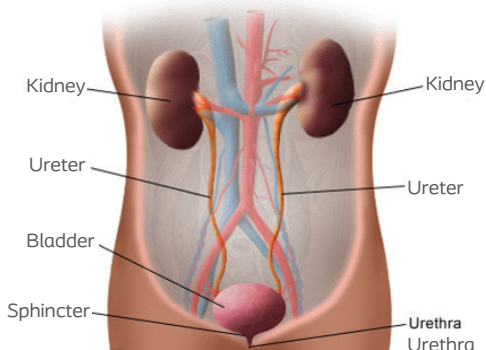
Intermittent self-catheterization is a way to empty your bladder on a regular schedule. It helps keep the bladder healthy—and it's one of the keys to independence. Managing your intermittent self-catheterization regimen offers more control of your daily schedule. It also allows you to pursue an active social life and the freedom to seek out the activities you enjoy.

When you're first learning the process of intermittent self-catheterization the technique can be challenging. The good news is that thousands of people have also experienced these temporary challenges and still managed to master the catheterization technique. It just takes training and practice. So be patient - you will be an expert in no time! Here is some basic information about intermittent self-catheterization.

1. How does urine pass through the urinary system?

Urine is made in the kidneys and travels to the bladder through the ureters. The bladder stores urine until the brain sends a signal telling the bladder that it is getting full. Urine then leaves the body through the urethra. The body needs an intact, healthy spinal cord for all of this communication to happen.

You may be one of the many people who have injuries to their spinal cord. Depending on the location of the injury, your bladder may have limitations related to either emptying or storing urine (the same may be true of emptying the bowels)^{1,2}. Intermittent catheterization helps you mimic the regular emptying of your bladder that occurred before the disruption within the spinal cord. By letting your bladder fill and then empty throughout the day you are increasing your chances of maintaining a healthy urinary tract.



1. Indication of Catheterization for Intermittent Catheters (IC). Urotoday.com, Published March 2021. <https://www.urotoday.com/urinary-catheters-home/intermittent-catheters/description/indications-intermittent-catheters.html>
2. 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. Why do people rely on intermittent self-catheterization?¹

People perform intermittent self-catheterization for a number of reasons related to chronic urine retention or post-void residual volume:

- Spinal cord injury
- Certain diseases or conditions such as spina bifida, Parkinson's disease, diabetes or multiple sclerosis (MS)
- A result of surgery or certain medications
- Problems with urinary retention (being unable to empty your bladder completely)
- Urinary incontinence (leaking of urine, or inability to control when you urinate)
- Benign prostatic hyperplasia
- Stricture

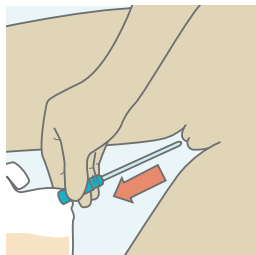


3. How do I insert the catheter?

Prior to use, refer to the instructions and then assemble equipment and perform hand hygiene with alcohol-based hand sanitizer, moist towelette or soap and water, and dry hand towel. When using an uncoated catheter, use a water-soluble lubricant.

For women

1. Use soap and water to wash hands. If soap and water are not available, waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizer or towelettes may be used.³
2. Separate the labia and gently clean the area around the urethral opening (use soap and water or moist towelette). Wipe from front to back (urethra toward anus).⁴ Bacteria live on the outside of the skin, and when inserting the catheter that bacteria may be introduced, so cleaning the area prior to insertion is important.
3. If using a hydrophilic-coated catheter, no additional lubricant is needed, however there may be a need to activate the coating (see manufacturers' instructions for use). If using an uncoated catheter, use a water-soluble lubricant and lubricate the tip and the first 2 inches of the catheter (see manufacturers' instructions for use).
4. Take slow, deep breaths and slowly insert the catheter into the urethra until urine starts to flow. Insert the catheter another 1 inch and keep it there until the urine stops flowing.
5. Once urine has stopped flowing, slowly withdraw the catheter to make sure the bladder is empty.
6. Throw away the catheter after using it and wash your hands once more.



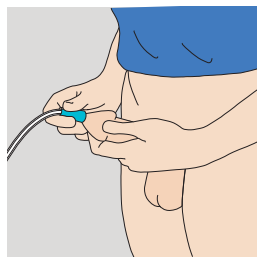
3. Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates. Intermittent Self-Catheterization Patient Fact Sheet. 2019.

4. 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>

place in an accessible area. Equipment needed: catheter, hydrophilic-coated catheter a water-soluble lubricant is recommended.

For men

1. Use soap and water to wash hands. If soap and water are not available, waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizer or towelettes may be used.³
2. Gently clean the head of the penis (use soap and water or moist towelette). Use a circular motion, starting at the urethra.
3. If using a SpeediCath® hydrophilic-coated catheter, no additional lubricant is needed. If using an uncoated catheter, use a water-soluble lubricant and lubricate the tip and the first 6" of the catheter.
4. Take slow, deep breaths and slowly insert the catheter into the urethra until urine starts to flow. Insert the catheter another 1 inch and keep it there until the urine stops flowing.
5. Once urine has stopped flowing, slowly withdraw the catheter to ensure the bladder is empty.
6. Throw away the catheter after using it (put in a plastic bag or wrap in a paper towel) and wash your hands once more.



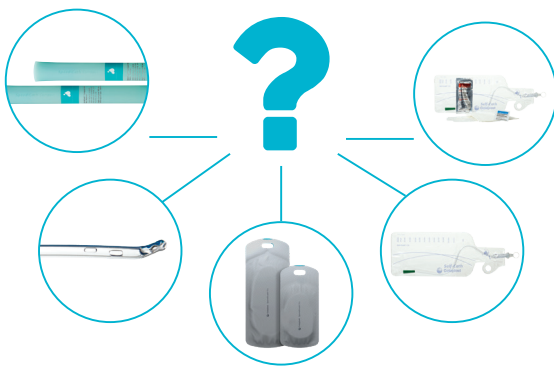
4. What if I am in a public bathroom?

The same rules of hygiene apply whether you're at home, at a friend's house or in a public restroom. If you need to touch anything after you wash your hands – your wheelchair rims or the door – it's important to use hand sanitizing gel or wash again! If a sink and water aren't available, you can use an antiseptic towelette to clean the urethral area before you insert the catheter. Many people find it helpful to keep needed supplies in a plastic bag. When you are finished, you can discard your used items in the bag.



5. What options do I have with catheters?⁵

There are many types and brands of intermittent catheters made from different materials that offer various lengths, sizes, tips, and position of the opening. Men who are experiencing trouble inserting a straight tip catheter may require a coude tip catheter.



Some catheters, called closed catheter systems, come as a sterile catheter and urine collection bag all in one unit. In addition, some of the closed systems come as kits which also include gloves, drape, and prep pads.

Note: Speak with your physician or clinician when considering these options. Some catheters may require a new prescription to qualify for insurance coverage.

5. Newman, DK. Methods and types of urinary catheters used for indwelling or intermittent catheterization. *Urologic Nursing*, March-April, 41(2); 111-117. 2021.

6. What should I look for in the urine?

Normally urine is clear yellow and has little to no odor. However some foods – such as asparagus, onions, and food from the cabbage family such as broccoli – can produce odor in urine. Medications may also produce odor or color changes in urine, so check with your pharmacist about the medications you take. In general, darker, more concentrated urine that has a stronger odor may indicate that you are not drinking enough liquids.

You might also notice sediment or mucus shreds in the urine. Sediment or mucus shreds may be caused by a natural process of the body regularly shedding dead cells from the bladder lining, but may also be related to other serious complications. If you consistently see sediment or mucus with catheterization, follow up with a healthcare provider for guidance. Small amounts of blood in the urine may occur from the process of inserting the catheter into the urethra. Large amounts of blood can be a symptom of a medical problem, like a urinary tract infection. In this case you should call your physician or clinician immediately.



Signs of a symptomatic urinary tract infection (UTI):

- Increased urgency to urinate
- Low back and/or flank pain
- Persistent blood in the urine
- Fever
- Chills
- Unexpected urine leakage
- Increased spasms of the legs, abdomen or bladder
- Pain in the bladder area above the pubic bone
- Fatigue and feeling poorly (malaise)
- Increased episodes of Autonomic Dysreflexia (AD) for individuals with a spinal cord injury
- Unexpected urine leakage
- Foul smelling urine
- Increasing sediment/cloudiness

Be proactive. These symptoms should always be reported to your doctor.

Untreated UTIs can lead to the spread of infection to other body systems and more severe consequences.⁶

6. 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

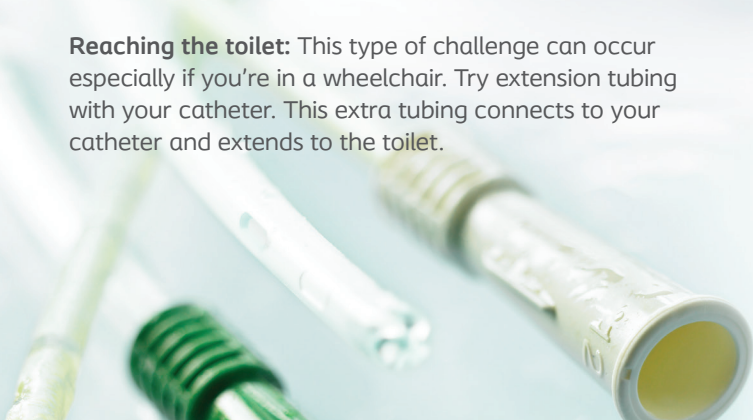
8. Troubleshooting tips

Prior to use, consult the instructions for use. When you're first learning to do intermittent self-catheterization, it's normal to encounter difficulties. Some people find they're successful if they pause, take a deep breath, and try one more time. Some common issues others who catheterize have dealt with include:

Finding the urethral opening: A handheld mirror can be very useful.

Experiencing pain when inserting the catheter: It may be uncomfortable when first starting to use intermittent catheters. Try to relax if using an uncoated catheter and use lubrication according to product instructions. If the discomfort continues or you are experiencing pain, you should inform your physician or clinician immediately. Many catheter options are available that may help, such as a softer catheter, hydrophilic coating to reduce discomfort and aid lubrication, and innovative catheter tip designs. Never force the catheter into your urethra or bladder. If you feel resistance, take slow, deep breaths and gently insert the catheter. If deep breathing is not helpful, stop and contact your healthcare professional for further instructions.

Reaching the toilet: This type of challenge can occur especially if you're in a wheelchair. Try extension tubing with your catheter. This extra tubing connects to your catheter and extends to the toilet.





Handling the catheter: People with limited hand dexterity may find self-catheterization to be more difficult. If you experience problems handling the catheter, speak to your physician about available options. You may be able to try a different type, such as:

- **Funnel-end catheter** – it offers a wider end you can grasp. Gripper or no-touch sleeve - for a more confident and hygienic catheter insertion
- **Closed catheter system** – this self-contained, one-piece unit may be easier to handle
- **More Firm Catheter** – you may also want to consider a firmer catheter that allows for better control

If you continue to experience difficulty due to dexterity issues, ask your physician or clinician about seeing an occupational therapist who may be able to offer additional one-on-one advice.

Note: Speak with your physician or clinician when considering these options to determine which option is best for you.

9. Are there tips to help me keep on schedule?

At first, some people use charts, which are a good visual cue. Charts are also helpful if your physician wants you to keep track of the amount of urine you pass. Other suggestions might be to set a watch, a reminder app, or a cell phone alarm. Remember that it's very important to maintain your intermittent self-catheterization schedule. This helps keep your bladder healthy, can help avoid leaking, and possibly help prevent urinary tract infections.



10. Special considerations

What advice do you have for using an external (condom) catheter? At times, people may experience leakage between intermittent self-catheterizations, often during the night. Men may be advised to use a male external collection system. The system consists of a male external catheter (sometimes called a condom catheter), which is a sheath that fits over the penis attached to a urine collection bag (sometimes called a drainage bag).

The key to success when using a male external catheter is getting the right diameter size and sheath length. This can help prevent leakage. A sizing guide is available for each type of male external catheter from the manufacturer or from your supplier.

There are different types of male external catheters. One of the most common is a self-adhesive male external catheter that has a clear sheath. A male external catheter must always be connected to a urine collection bag. There are different types of drainage bags. One type of drainage bag attaches to your bed or chair and holds larger amounts of urine. There is also a drainage bag that attaches to the leg and is more discreet for daytime use. The bag will need to be replaced on a regular basis. Check with your insurer for monthly usage guidelines.

If you have any questions regarding intermittent self-catheterization, product usage or availability please contact a Coloplast® Care Advisor at 1-866-226-6362.

This information is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to substitute for professional medical advice and should not be interpreted to contain treatment recommendations. Individuals should follow the specific instructions provided by their healthcare professional and the product they are using.

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