Self Catheterization Guide
Medical professionals have recommended that you self-catheterize in order to completely empty your bladder. This prevents the retention of urine and reduces the risk of infection and discomfort.

You are not alone and many people of all ages self-catheterize every day. They include people with spinal cord injuries, neurological conditions such as Multiple Sclerosis and various forms of bladder dysfunction. Some people were born with conditions that cause urinary retention and learn to self-catheterize from an early age.

INTERMITTENT CATHETER USE
SAFE AND EASY FOR EVERY DAY LIFE

While the phrase ‘self-catheterization’ might sound a little intimidating, most people find it very easy to self-catheterize after a little practice. Intermittent catheters makes the process easier and more comfortable than it has ever been enabling you to simply get on with your daily life, however busy it might be.

Your doctor or nurse will advise you as to how often you should self-catheterize but generally it can be four to six times a day.

When practiced properly, even over long periods of time, self-catheterization is a safe and effective means of managing urinary retention. If you are having any problems inserting the catheter, or experiencing any symptoms of a urinary tract infection, please contact your doctor or nurse.
Intermittent catheterization for men

1. Cleanse your hands thoroughly before preparing the catheter.
2. Cleanse your genitals as advised by your doctor or nurse and choose a position that is comfortable for you - it can be sitting or standing.
3. Pull back your foreskin (if present) and hold your penis up towards your stomach. This makes the urethra straighter and the catheter easier to insert.
4. Gently slide the catheter into the urethra and advance until urine flows, allowing the urine to drain into the toilet or a container.
5. When the flow of urine stops, gently remove the catheter.
6. Return your foreskin to its normal position, dispose of the catheter in an appropriate manner and cleanse your hands.

Intermittent catheterization for women

1. Cleanse your hands thoroughly before preparing the catheter.
2. Cleanse your genitals as advised by your doctor or nurse and choose a position that is comfortable for you - it can be squatting or sitting on the toilet, or standing with one foot on the toilet.
3. With two fingers spread the labia apart to find the urethral opening. Some women find it useful to use a mirror initially until they have the confidence to find the urethral opening by touch.
4. Gently slide the catheter into the urethra and advance until urine flows, allowing the urine to drain into the toilet or a container.
5. When the flow of urine stops, gently remove the catheter.
6. Dispose of the catheter in an appropriate manner and cleanse your hands.
Always ensure that you drink plenty of fluids to keep well hydrated. However, try to avoid large amounts of tea and coffee as they can irritate the bladder.

Sometimes resistance can be felt prior to catheter entering the bladder. If this happens, do not force the catheter but take a couple of deep breaths, relax for a few moments, and try again.

Tap water is usually of sufficient quality to activate hydrophilic coatings if your catheter has one. Your doctor or nurse will advise if this is appropriate for you, especially if you are travelling away from home.

Your doctor or nurse will advise as to the most appropriate method of cleansing your genital region, particularly when you are away from home.

### Useful tips

- Drink plenty of fluids
- Do not place your catheter on surfaces that are not clean or sterile
- Empty your bladder at prescribed intervals to maintain lower bladder pressures
- Use a sterile catheter for each catheterization
- Wash and clean around the urethra
- Keep skin clean and dry
- Change clothing if it becomes soiled or wet
- Wash hands before and after each catheterization

### HOW TO HELP PREVENT OR REDUCE UTIs

- Blood in Urine
- Burning in the urethral or pubic area
- Chills
- Urgent need to catheterize
- Fever of 100.4° or higher
- Foul smelling urine
- Headache
- Increase in spasms
- Leakage between catheterizations
- Low back pain
- Nausea
- Sediment or mucus in the urine
- Elevation in blood pressure

### WHEN TO CALL YOUR DOCTOR

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