



Patient & Family Guide
2021

Intermittent Clean Catheterization



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What is intermittent catheterization?

Intermittent catheterization is a way to drain urine (pee) from your bladder at different times. A catheter (thin, hollow tube) is passed through the urethra (short tube where urine from your bladder is moved outside of your body) into the bladder to drain the urine.

Why do I need to use a catheter?

Your bladder may not empty completely when you go to the bathroom, or it may not be able to hold all of your urine. Catheterization keeps you dry, prevents infection, and keeps your bladder and kidneys healthy.

How do I put the catheter in?

1. Before putting the catheter in, try to empty your bladder on your own, if you can.
2. Gather supplies:
 - Catheter type: _____
 - Catheter size: _____
 - Wash cloth
 - Soap and water
 - Container to collect urine
 - Water-based lubricating jelly such as Muko® or K-Y® Jelly.
 - › **Do not** use petroleum jelly (Vaseline®) or mineral oil, since these can increase your chance of a urinary tract infection (UTI).
 - Paper towel or hand towel
 - Hand-held mirror – For people with internal genitals, a mirror can help you find your urinary opening.
3. Wash both hands with soap and water.
4. Keep the container close and ready to collect urine.
5. Get into a comfortable position. If you are able, sit on or stand by the toilet with 1 leg up on the toilet seat or on a ledge.
6. Squeeze a dab of lubricating jelly onto a paper towel or clean hand towel.

For people with internal genitals (vagina)	For people with external genitals (penis)
<p>Note: Inserting a tampon into your vagina while you perform your self-catheterization may help you to insert the catheter.</p> <p>7. Roll the rounded end of the catheter in the jelly, covering about 2 inches.</p>	<p>7. Roll the rounded end of the catheter in the jelly, covering about 7 to 10 inches.</p>
<p>8. With one hand, separate the labia (folds of skin that protect the urethra and vagina). It may help to use a mirror. Wash the area well with a soapy wash cloth using downward strokes (from front to back).</p>	<p>8. Wash the end of your penis with warm water and soap. If you are not circumcised, pull back the foreskin before washing.</p>

For people with internal genitals (vagina)	For people with external genitals (penis)
<p>9. Keeping the labia open with your thumb and middle (3rd) finger, use your index (2nd) finger to feel for your urinary opening, called the meatus. This is where urine comes out of your body. You will feel a hood or dimple covering the meatus. Keep your finger on that spot.</p>	<p>9. With one hand, hold your penis straight out.</p>

For people with internal genitals (vagina)	For people with external genitals (penis)
10. Use your other hand to hold the catheter about 3 inches from the end. Touch the tip of the catheter to where your index finger is marking the spot. Gently guide the catheter into the urinary opening. You may need to insert (put in) the catheter about 3 inches before urine will start to flow freely.	10. With the other hand, hold the catheter. Slowly insert the catheter into the urethra until the urine starts to flow freely. This may be 7 to 10 inches. Let your penis go back to its natural position.

The catheter may feel harder to push in just before it goes into the bladder. This is normal. It can be caused by muscle spasm. If the catheter is not going in easily, try to relax and breathe deeply. As you breathe in, continue to push the catheter until it has passed this point and enters the bladder.

11. As urine starts to flow, move the end of the catheter towards the container or toilet.
12. When the flow of urine stops, slowly take out the catheter. If urine starts to flow again, stop taking out the catheter until all the urine has finished flowing. Pinch the catheter closed and take it out.
13. Be sure to note the amount of urine in the container before you empty it. Keep track of these amounts for your next appointment with your health care provider.

Washing your catheter

- Reusable catheters can be used for about 1 week (7 days). Try to have an extra catheter available as back-up.
- If you cannot wash the catheter right away, put it in a resealable plastic baggie (Ziploc[®] bag) and clean it later.
- Catheters **do not have to be boiled** before each use. This is a clean procedure, but not a sterile one.

To wash:

1. Wash the catheter with liquid dish soap and water or a mixture of vinegar and water.
2. Rinse well inside and out and air dry.
3. Place in catheter container (toothbrush holder).

Things to remember

- Try to empty your bladder often. **Do not** wait to empty your bladder for any reason. Waiting too long to empty your bladder can lead to an infection, a stretched bladder, or urine leakage.
- Always bring your catheter supplies with you wherever you go.
- It is important to wash your hands and genitals before emptying your bladder, but if you are ever in a situation where you cannot wash right away, it is more important to empty your bladder.
- Make sure the catheter does not touch any unclean surfaces before putting it inside your body, especially in a public washroom.

Call your primary health care provider if:

- › You have a fever (temperature above 38° C/100.4° F)
- › You see a change in the colour of your urine
- › You notice a smell
- › Your urine becomes cloudy
- › You see a change in the amount of your urine or are not able to urinate
- › You have burning or discomfort along the urethra
- › You have any trouble inserting the catheter (such as pain or bleeding)

If you have any of the symptoms listed above, throw away your catheter and use a new one.

If you are not able to reach your primary health care provider, call 811 or go to the nearest Emergency Department.

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Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.