

Information for Patients

Intermittent Self-Catheterisation for Women

Intermittent Self Catheterisation (ISC)

Intermittent Self Catheterisation (ISC) is a simple procedure to empty the bladder. It involves passing a small tube called a Catheter up the urethra (from where urine normally drains) into the bladder to allow the urine to empty.

The type of catheter used is called a Nelaton Catheter. ISC may be undertaken on a short or long term basis.

This booklet is designed to give you an overview of the technique, things to watch for and other useful information.



Why is ISC necessary?

When going to the toilet it is usual to pass most of the urine that is in the bladder. There are some situations where the bladder may not fully empty.

Most commonly due to

- Bladder muscles that cannot contract effectively.
- The effect of bladder surgery.
- Injury to the spinal nerves.
- Blockage of the urethra.

How often should the bladder be emptied?

You should catheterise whenever you feel full. If you cannot feel if your bladder is full, you should catheterise when you wake in the morning, 2-3 times during the day and just before you go to bed at night.

Measure the amounts you drain off occasionally to see that your bladder is not holding more than 300-400 mL. If the amount is more than this, you need to catheterise more often.

The Urologist, Continence Advisor or specialist Nurse will work with you to determine the frequency of catheterisation.

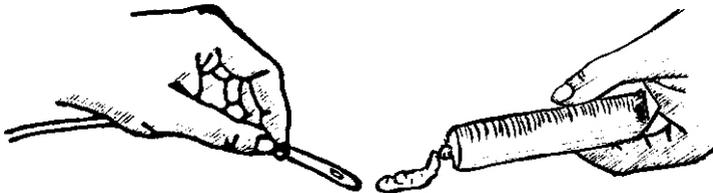
Does ISC lead to infection?

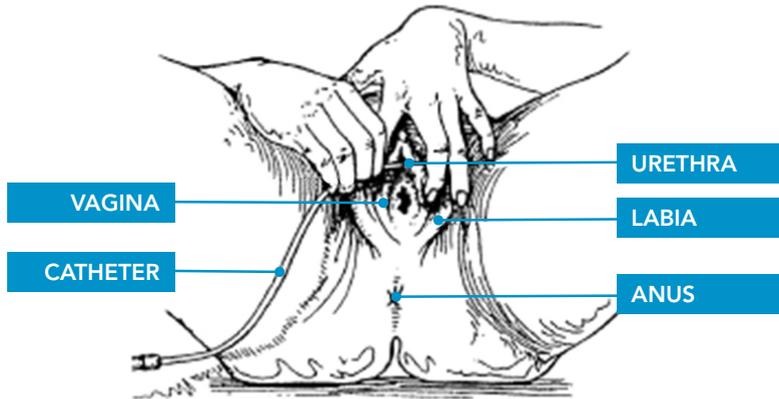
There is always a risk of infection when using a Catheter, however as you become more skilled with the technique the chances of developing an infection reduce.

Catheterisation is not a sterile procedure and it is important to wash your hands before and after catheterisation.

Getting started

- Collect the necessary equipment
 - Nelaton Catheter
 - Water soluble lubricant
 - Container for the urine (if not using the toilet)
- Wash your hands, using soap and water or antibacterial hand sanitiser.
- Setup your equipment on a clean, easily accessible surface
 - ensure the Catheter is within reach
 - apply lubricant onto a tissue.
- Get into a comfortable position. This may be lying on your bed, sitting on the toilet or wheelchair or standing over the toilet.
- If needed, set up a mirror to see your urethra.
- Remove the Catheter from the packet or clean container. Try not to touch the Catheter tip.
- Dip or roll the Catheter tip into the lubricant.





Part the labia with one hand, and then holding the Catheter in the other hand gently insert the Catheter into the urethra. Direct the Catheter upward until urine flows.

- Pass urine into toilet or container.
- When urine stops flowing, slowly withdraw the Catheter. If more urine starts to drain, stop removing the catheter, allowing the bladder to empty. When there is no urine draining, remove the Catheter.
- Clean the Catheter by rinsing it under clean running water, tip end upward.
- Shake dry and store in a clean, dry, sealed container ready for the next use.
- Wash your hands.



Troubleshooting

Blood in the Catheter or urine

Occasionally, you may see blood in the urine or Catheter. This is not uncommon, particularly when you are learning this technique.

- Try using more lubricant.
- Check for signs of infection.

Only be concerned if the bleeding persists or becomes heavy. Seek medical advice if this occurs.

Difficulty introducing or removing the Catheter

This may occur because of an awkward technique or spasm of the sphincter muscles.

- Check that you are in a comfortable position.
- Take some deep breaths, relax as you slowly exhale and gently but firmly introduce or remove the Catheter.
- Try using more lubricant.
- Take a break and walk away for several minutes before attempting to insert the Catheter again.

No urine is draining

- Ensure that the Catheter has been inserted far enough to reach the bladder.
- Gently try pulling the Catheter back a short distance.

Urinary tract infection

If your urine becomes cloudy or has an odour, or you have increased pain or burning when inserting the Catheter, you may have an infection.

If you suspect that you have a urinary infection it is important to seek advice from your GP or Urology Associates promptly. Do not wait until you get sick.



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