



SELF-CATHETERISATION IN WOMEN

Frequently-Asked Questions

What is self-catheterisation?

Self-catheterisation means that you insert a small, flexible plastic tube into the bladder. The urine flows out through this tube which is then removed and washed. By emptying the bladder regularly in this way, you will prevent a build-up of stagnant urine and should feel more comfortable. You will also be keeping the kidneys and bladder healthy by preventing urinary infections. Some people find that they have less difficulty preventing themselves becoming wet using this technique.

What equipment do I need?

- A catheter – supplied at first by the outpatient clinic and then available to order on prescription from your GP Baby wipes
- Shaving mirror and a good light are helpful, particularly at first
- A bottle, dish or plastic box to catch the urine

How do I do it?

- Sit on a towel with a plastic sheet just underneath or lie on the bed if you prefer
- Remove your pants and tuck other clothing out of the way
- Wash your hands thoroughly
- Lie on your back, comfortably propped up with your knees wide apart. Using the light and mirror to help you, find the opening of the urethra which is in front of the vagina and behind the clitoris
- If it is difficult to see the hole, draw the labia forwards and upwards whilst separating them with your fingers. It is also possible to feel the urethra which is like a small pit on a sensitive mound
- Clean inside the labia from front to back using baby wipes
- Hold the catheter 2 inches from its tip and insert it until urine flows (usually needs insertion for 2-3 inches) If no urine comes out, the catheter is probably in the vagina. This will do no harm and simply means taking it out and looking again for the urethra, just further forwards
- When urine stops flowing, insert the catheter a little further and turn it gently to obtain any remaining urine
- Withdraw the catheter slowly
- Rinse the catheter under running water, dry on a clean tissue and store in a clean plastic bag open to the air if possible



Personal information

Use the catheter times a day

Use a new plastic bag every day

Discard the catheter and use a new catheter for each catheterisation (catheters are single-use and are not re-usable)

Catheter information

Catheter recommended..... (female)

SizeFG

Are there any other important points?

This publication provides input from specialists, the British Association of Urological Surgeons, the Department of Health and evidence-based sources as a supplement to any advice you may already have been given by your GP. Alternative treatments can be discussed in more detail with your urologist or Specialist Nurse.

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