Specialist Continence Advisory Service

Local Partnerships

Patient Information Leaflet Number 8

A Male Guide to Intermittent Self Catheterisation (single use catheter)

"Intermittent self catheterisation has improved my life so much, I can now go out, relax and enjoy myself."

It will make a difference to you"

(Quote from a patient)
What is Intermittent Self Catheterisation (ISC)?
A narrow catheter is passed into the opening of the urethra to drain urine away from the bladder. When this is completed, the catheter is then removed.

Why do I have to do (ISC)?
Intermittent self-catheterisation is done when the bladder does not empty completely or does not empty at all.

What are the advantages for me?
- You are in control of your bladder
- No need for a permanent catheter
- Reduces risk of urinary tract infections
- Allows a normal sexual relationship
- Reduces problems with incontinence
- Helps protect your kidneys from damage

Personal Hygiene
You yourself carry out the whole procedure so hand washing and personal hygiene are very important as they reduce the risk of infection.
What do I need?
- A Private area
- Access to a sink for hand washing or anti-bacterial hand gel
- Access to soap and water or wipes to cleanse urethral opening
- Your catheter (available on prescription)
- Disposal bag for waste

How do I do ISC?

1. Wash your hands with soap and water (liquid soap is preferable). If you are away from home, you can use a hand gel.
2. Prepare the catheter following the manufacturers instructions.
3. Adjust clothing to gain access to urethral opening.
4. Wash and dry your penis, pulling back the foreskin (if necessary)
5. Stand or sit in a comfortable position which allows access to insert the catheter and allow the urine to drain out into either the toilet or a clean container. Continue to hold the catheter in place.
6. Gently and slowly withdraw the catheter to allow any
remaining urine to drain from the bladder. When flow stops gently remove the catheter.  
7. Dispose of catheter in it's packaging or a bag in the dustbin.  
   Do not flush down the toilet.  
8. Wash your hands and dry thoroughly using the hand washing technique.  

Frequently Asked Questions  

Will it hurt?  
The procedure should not hurt. Initially it may cause mild discomfort, if it continues contact your nurse or doctor.  

How often should I do it?  
This is decided between yourself and your nurse or doctor and depending on how much urine is being drained.  

What happens if I can’t insert the catheter?  
• Check the position you are in and adjust to see if this helps.  
• Sometimes a gentle cough helps the sphincter muscle to relax so that you can insert the catheter.  
• Wait 30 minutes and try again.  

What happens if I see blood?  
Bleeding may occur when you insert the catheter - a small amount of blood on the catheter tip is quite normal. If the bleeding continues contact your nurse or doctor.  

What do I do if no urine drains?  
Try again with a new catheter - you may not have inserted it far enough into your bladder.  

What do I do if I can’t remove the catheter?  
This may be caused by a spasm - do not pull out. Breath deeply as it may take a few minutes for the spasm to pass and allow the catheter to be removed.  

How will I know if I have an infection?  
You may notice burning or stinging when you pass urine, you may feel unwell and have a fever. Take a sample of urine to your GP immediately. If this happens often discuss with your nurse.  

How long will I have to catheterise myself?  
This is individual and depends on your bladder function - please discuss with your nurse or doctor.  

Always ensure you keep a week’s supply of catheters.  

Further Information  
Further useful information can be accessed on the NHS website:  
www.nhs.uk  

What to do if you have a problem with your continence products?  

Please contact your District Nursing Team using the details on the back of this leaflet.