

It is very important for you to stay on your catheterization schedule.

Intermittent Self-Catheterization for Females

Your physician has ordered intermittent self-catheterization. A catheter is a flexible hollow tube that you insert into your bladder to drain your urine. It is very important for you to stay on your catheterization schedule and use a new catheter each time. This helps prevent a urinary tract infection and loss of bladder control (incontinence).

Drain your bladder with the catheter every _____ hours.

Supplies

A physician's prescription is needed to purchase catheters. You can buy them at any medical supply store. You will need:

- Prescribed catheter
- Water-soluble lubricant, such as K-Y® Jelly. (Do **not** use Vaseline®.)

Please note: Hydrophilic catheters have a special coating that makes them smooth and slippery when wet. If you are using a hydrophilic or pre-lubricated catheter, lubricant is not needed.

Preparation and procedure

1. Wash your hands with soap and water, an antiseptic towelette or waterless hand cleaner.
2. Spread your labia apart (Figure 1 on the next page). Wash the area around the urinary opening (urethral orifice) with soap and water or a moist towelette, such as a baby wipe. Be sure to wipe from front to back.
3. Place a generous amount of water-soluble lubricant along the tip of the catheter. If you are using a hydrophilic or pre-lubricated catheter, lubricant is not needed.
4. If you are right-handed, use the 2nd and 4th finger of your left hand to hold your labia apart.
5. Locate your urinary opening with the 3rd finger of your left hand.
6. With your right hand, hold the catheter about 1 inch from the tip. Direct the catheter slightly upward toward your belly button. Continue to insert the catheter gently until urine begins to flow (Figure 2 on the next page).
7. Allow the urine to drain until the urine flow stops.
8. Remove the catheter slowly. Stop whenever urine flows. Allow the catheter to drain. Continue to remove the catheter slowly.

Figure 1. Spreading apart the labia

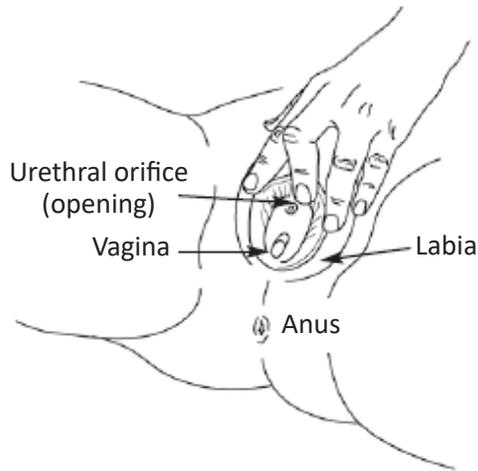
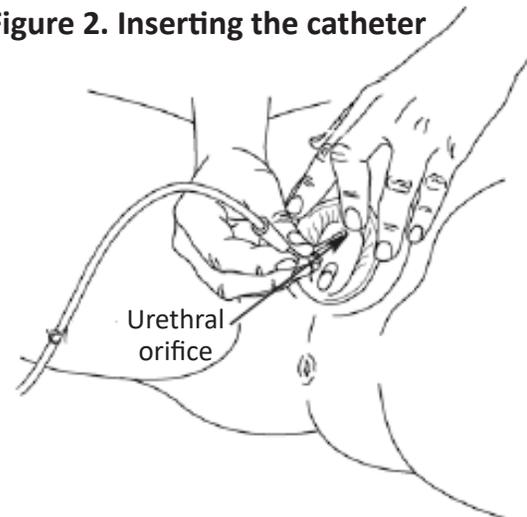


Figure 2. Inserting the catheter



9. Pinch the catheter just before removing it completely to avoid urine leaking from the tube.
10. Wash your hands with soap and water, an antiseptic towelette or waterless hand cleaner.

Helpful hints

- You may catheterize yourself while standing, sitting, squatting or lying on your back in your own home. It is important to learn to catheterize yourself while standing in case you need to use a public restroom or if a restroom is unavailable (for example, while camping).
- For the first time, use a mirror to find the location of your urinary opening. Once you are comfortable with the procedure, practice and learn to catheterize yourself without a mirror so that you do not become dependent on using one.
- If you cannot easily insert the catheter and you become nervous, stop and take a deep breath. Then start over. It is normal to have difficulty the first few times.
- Do not force the catheter at any time.
- Ask your physician how much water or other fluids you should drink each day.
- Always carry antiseptic towelettes to cleanse your hands in case water is not available.

When to call your physician

Your physician may prescribe an antibiotic to reduce your risk of infection. Call your physician as soon as possible if you notice any of these symptoms:

- Unusually cloudy, foul-smelling or blood-tinged urine
- Pain over your bladder area (lower abdomen)
- A temperature more than 101.5 degrees F
- Chills
- Leaking urine in between catheterizations

Your physician or advanced practice nurse: _____

Phone: _____