

# Intermittent Self-Catheterization (Female)

## GENERAL INFORMATION

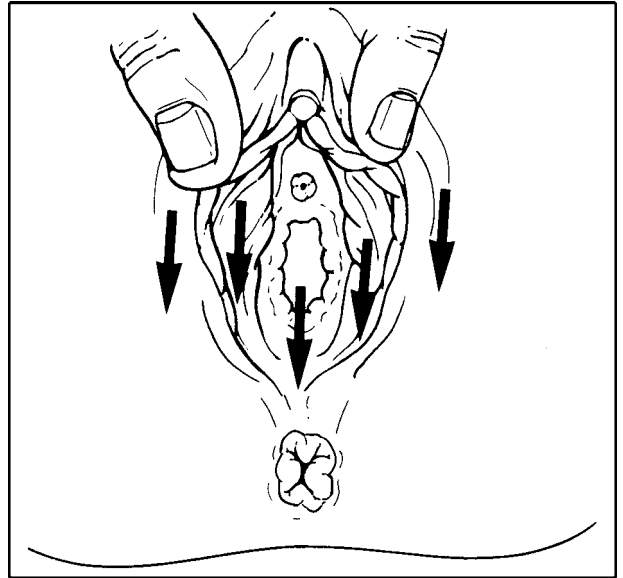
Catheterization is a procedure in which a small plastic or rubber catheter is placed into the bladder to drain the urine. Intermittent catheterization is placing a catheter into your bladder on a regular schedule to prevent too much urine from collecting or to help with incontinence.

## EQUIPMENT

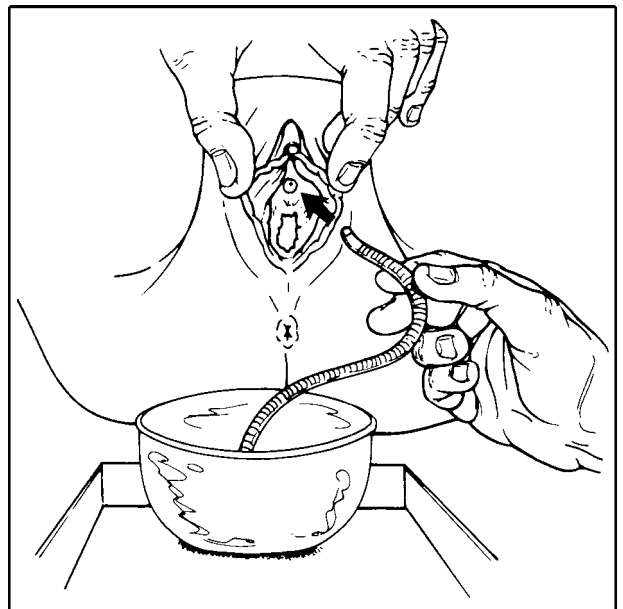
- Number \_\_\_\_\_ straight catheter (plastic or rubber)
- Soap, water, and a washcloth or moist disposable towelettes
- A plastic bag or glass jar for the used catheter
- A container for collecting urine (if a toilet is not available or the urine is to be measured)
- Two clean towels
- A mirror
- Optional: lubricant

## STEPS FOR CATHETERIZATION

1. Try to urinate before catheterizing yourself.
2. Wash your hands with soap and warm water. If no soap and water are available, use a moist disposable towelette.
3. Organize your equipment within easy reach.
4. Get into a position that is as comfortable and natural as possible. Sit on the edge of the toilet or a chair, or stand with one foot elevated on a stool (as if inserting a tampon).
5. The mirror can be positioned between your legs to help you find your urinary meatus (opening). However, you should also learn to find the meatus without the mirror, because a mirror may not always be available.
6. Separate your vaginal folds with the thumb and middle finger of your nondominant hand.
7. Wash the vaginal area with warm water and soap. If soap and water are not available, wash with a moist disposable towelette. Use downward strokes from front to back.



8. Keep your vaginal folds separated.
9. Hold the catheter about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch from the tip, using your dominant hand. You may be instructed to use a lubricant on the tip to help with insertion.
10. Position the draining end of the catheter so that the urine can flow into the toilet or the collection container.
11. Slowly insert the catheter into the urinary meatus.



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## Intermittent Self-Catheterization (Female)

12. When the urine begins to flow, insert the catheter 1 inch more. This is to make sure the catheter is in your bladder.
13. When the urine stops flowing, change your position or press (strain) your stomach muscles. This helps to empty your bladder completely.
14. Withdraw the catheter slowly. Keep the catheter tip pointed up to avoid dribbling urine.
15. Wash your hands and get dressed.
16. Complete your *Self-Catheterization Log*.
17. Follow the steps for catheter care.

### Catheter Care

1. Wash the dirty catheter with warm water and soap. (If there is no soap and water, wipe it with a moist disposable towelette and put it into the bag or jar. Complete total catheter care when soap and water are available.)
  2. Rinse the catheter (inside and out) with clear clean water.
  3. Dry the catheter completely with a clean towel.
  4. Put the catheter in a plastic bag or glass jar.
  5. When all of the catheters are used (or once a week), boil them for 20 minutes in water.
  6. Store the boiled catheters in clean towels, clean glass jars, or fresh plastic bags. **KEEP BOILED CATHETERS IN A SEPARATE LOCATION FROM USED CATHETERS.**
  7. Use each catheter only once after it has been boiled.
  8. Buy new catheters to replace ones that crack or become hard.
2. Take your medications as prescribed.
  3. Take liquid refreshments at evenly spaced times between the time you get up and 2 hours before you go to bed. Do not drink large amounts in short periods of time.
  4. Avoid caffeine (coffee, tea, cocoa, cola, and chocolate).
  5. Limit the calcium-rich foods in your diet (milk, milk products, eggs, green leafy vegetables, broccoli, legumes, nuts, and whole grains).
  6. Limit the phosphorus-rich foods in your diet (milk, milk products, lean meats, processed foods, and soft drinks).
  7. Be accurate when recording information on your *Self-Catheterization Log*.
  8. Keep extra supplies for catheterization at home and work.
  9. If you are incontinent (have uncontrolled urination) between catheterizations,
    - a. Wash the wet skin with soap and water,
    - b. Dry the skin completely,
    - c. Expose the skin to the air for as long as possible,
    - d. Use powder or cornstarch sparingly,
    - e. Change into dry underwear and clothes,
    - f. Consider the use of an external urine collection device.
  10. Ask the nurse or doctor anything you are unsure of or have questions about.
  11. Urine is usually a light yellow color with little odor. Dark urine with a strong odor may be a sign of not drinking enough fluids or of a urinary tract infection. Some foods and medications can cause a urine odor. Call your nurse or doctor if you notice dark, strong-smelling urine.

### IMPORTANT POINTS

1. Follow your catheterization schedule at all times.

### OTHER INSTRUCTIONS

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