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Intermittent self-catheterisation

***Information for
patients and carers***

**NHS Grampian Bladder and Bowel
Specialist Service**

What is intermittent self-catheterisation?

Intermittent self-catheterisation means passing a hollow tube (catheter) along the urethra and into the bladder. This allows urine to flow out through the catheter into the toilet (or a jug) until the bladder is empty. The catheter is then removed and disposed of.

Why do I need to perform intermittent self-catheterisation?

Intermittent self-catheterisation is recommended if you can't empty your bladder completely or routinely during the day. This may happen due to a variety of reasons, for example after some types of surgery, childbirth or because of neurological conditions such as multiple sclerosis.

Intermittent self-catheterisation is particularly useful for people who have frequent urinary tract infections due to incomplete emptying of their bladder or who have urinary incontinence.

If performed regularly, intermittent self-catheterisation can help to keep your bladder healthy and prevent damage to your kidneys.

Some people find that they only need to carry out intermittent self-catheterisation for a short period. However, others may need to do it for longer. Your health care professional or doctor can advise you on this.

Will, I be taught how to do this?

A health care professional (a registered nurse, district nurse or bladder and bowel specialist nurse) will explain the reasons why you should carry out intermittent self-catheterisation and discuss the procedure with you.

They may use diagrams, an information leaflets, a web-link or show you how to insert the catheters.

People vary in the time it takes them to learn this procedure. You'll find that your technique improves as your confidence grows.

There are different catheters available and we'll give you the relevant leaflet about your catheter. The leaflet includes:

- how to prepare the catheter
- how to catheterise
- how to dispose of the catheter.

You'll have further appointments at home, at the clinic or over the phone to support you and help with any questions that you may have.

We'll give you a contact number you can call if there are any problems.

How often will I need to do it?

We will ask you to record on a chart how much urine you pass when you go to the toilet and when you use the catheter. We use this information to decide how often you should use the catheter. You may also have a bladder scan, which is a non-invasive procedure, to find out if you're emptying your bladder completely.

Where do I get catheters from?

You can get more catheters on prescription from your doctor or from the manufacturer's home delivery service. Your health care professional will explain this service to you.

How do I store catheters?

Store your catheters flat and in a dry place, not in a bathroom where it can be damp. Some catheters can be folded to go into a pocket, but please check the manufacturer's instructions before you do this.

If the catheter packaging is damaged in any way, **do not use the catheter – throw it away**. Within unopened/undamaged packaging, catheters are sterile.

Your health care professional will regularly review how you're getting on and will update you with any new catheters that may be available. The frequency of visits will be agreed by you and your health care professional. If you have problems with the catheters you are using, please contact your health care professional.

What about going on holiday?

If you are going abroad on holiday, ask your GP for a written statement that you need the catheters for medical reasons and are for your personal use. Make sure you take enough catheters with you. Your health care professional can advise you on this before you go on holiday. Your health care professional can also provide a travel certificate.

Contact telephone number

If you would like further advice, you can call

Name:

:

Other useful contact details

Bladder and Bowel Community (offer written information, online support forums and campaign for better services). Their aim is to break down isolation, promote emotional wellbeing and encourage self help.

Bladder and Bowel Community
7 The Court
Holywell Business Park
Northfield Road
Southam
CV47 0FS

General

enquiries:  **01926 357220** 


Email: help@bladderandbowel.org

Website: www.bladderandbowel.org

Bladder and Bowel UK

Resources for **bladder and bowel** problems. Helpline run by specialist nurses and continence product information staff.

Website: www.bbuk.org

Helpline:  **0161 607 8219**

**This leaflet is also available in large print.
Other formats and languages can be
supplied on request. Please call Quality
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Ask for leaflet 0701.**

Feedback from the public helped us to develop this leaflet.
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