

Catheterizing Yourself

Female

Sometimes health problems make it hard for you to urinate. You may need to put a catheter in your bladder to drain your urine. This is called “self catheterization” or “in and out cath.”

When To Catheterize Yourself

Your doctor will tell you how often you need to catheterize yourself. Most people need to drain their urine every 3-6 hours. This depends on how much you drink and how active you are. The amount of urine you drain should be below the 500 mL mark on your measuring container. If you drain more than 500 mL, you need to catheterize yourself more often.

Other signs that may show it is time to catheterize yourself are when you:

- Feel restless.
- Start sweating (without exercising).
- Get chills.
- Have a headache.
- Feel your lower abdomen is swollen.
- Feel “full.”

Call your doctor if:

- You need to catheterize yourself more often than usual.
- Your urine is cloudy.
- Your urine smells bad.
- There is blood in your urine.
- You have trouble getting your catheter in or out.
- You have any unusual discharge from your bladder

Supplies You will Need

- A clean catheter
- Water-soluble jelly (This is special medical lubricant that helps the catheter go in easily.)
- Soap and water
- 2 clean, unused washcloths
- Container with marks to at least 1000 ml
- Mirror

How To Catheterize Yourself

- 1) Wash your hands with soap and water. Dry them on a clean, unused towel.
- 2) Open your supplies.
- 3) Wet two washcloths. Put soap on one of them.
- 4) Open the skin folds around the opening to your bladder (urethra). Wash the opening with the soapy washcloth. Clean from front to back.
- 5) Rinse with warm water.
- 6) Set your urine container where it will catch the urine when it comes out of the catheter.
- 7) Put the tip of the catheter into the water-soluble jelly. Move the catheter around to get jelly all over the tip.
- 8) Put the catheter into the opening to your bladder (urethra). Gently move the catheter in until you see urine come out of the end. Pushing gently on your lower abdomen may help the urine drain.
- 10) When no more urine comes out, slowly pull the catheter out. As you pull back, more urine may drain out. If this happens, stop and let the urine drain. Then, continue to take the catheter out.
- 11) Write down the amount of urine in the container.
- 12) Pour the urine out in the toilet.
- 13) Wash your hands.

