
Emptying the bladder using intermittent catheterization

Emptying the bladder sufficiently can be challenging for many reasons, for example after an operation or due to a gynaecological prolapse. If you are unable to urinate at all or if you are unable to empty the bladder sufficiently, the bladder can be emptied using a catheter. If necessary, you will be given intermittent catheterization instructions.

Intermittent catheterization at home

Maintain good hygiene as you catheterize. You can insert the catheter while either sitting or standing. Some catheters are pre-lubricated, and others have packaging that must be filled with tap water before use.

- If you are able, try to urinate before inserting the catheter and if necessary, measure the amount of urine.
- Wash your hands with soap and water and wash your genital area using only water. Spread the labia so that you see or feel the urethral opening. Use a mirror if it needed.
- Gently slide the catheter in until urine starts to flow. If you have accidentally inserted the catheter into your vagina, take a new catheter and try again.
- Drain the urine into a measuring vessel.
- Slide the catheter out slowly after the flow of urine has stopped.

Ensuring sufficient emptying of the bladder

- Catheterize yourself every 4 hours during the day and every 6 hours during the night.
- Note down the amount of urine you urinate and catheterize.
- If the amount you catheterize exceeds 500 ml, reduce the time between catheterizations by one hour.
- If the amount you catheterize is under 150 ml, extend the time between catheterizations by one hour.
- You can stop intermittent catheterization when the amounts of you urine you catheterize are repeatedly under 150 to 200 ml.

Follow-up

Follow-up is arranged on case-by-case basis. If you develop symptoms of a urinary tract infection or if you are unable to catheterize yourself at home, contact the unit responsible for your care.