



Cleaning Red Rubber Catheters

Preventing bladder infections

This handout explains how to sterilize your red rubber catheters.

Your red rubber catheters **must** be sterilized between each use. This helps prevent bladder and kidney infections. You want your catheters to have as few bacteria (germs) on them as possible before you use them.

Supplies You Will Need

- Saucepan with a lid (you may wish to use the pan only for this purpose)
- Used catheters
- Plastic sandwich bags with zipper-type seal
- Water-soluble lubricant (optional for women)

Steps to Follow

1. Wash your hands with warm water and soap.
2. Wash used catheters with warm soapy water. Rinse thoroughly.
3. Place catheters in saucepan.
4. Cover catheters with tap water.
5. Put lid on the pan.
6. Bring water to a boil.
7. **Boil for 10 minutes.**
8. Turn off the burner and let the water cool.
9. Wash your hands again.
10. Pick up each catheter by the open end. Let the water drain out.
11. Place the catheters on a clean towel to dry completely.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

Rehabilitation Clinic:
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12. After the catheters are dry, squirt a small amount of lubricant on the tip of each catheter (optional).
13. Store each catheter in a separate ziplock bag. **Make sure each bag is closed.**
14. **Store each closed bag in the refrigerator** until you need it for catheterization. Storing your sterilized catheters in the refrigerator limits bacteria growth.
15. You should store **only the catheters you will need for the next 3 days** in the refrigerator.
16. You may store sterilized catheters in the freezer up to 30 days. You can keep all clean catheters in a gallon ziplock bag in the freezer and remove the ones that you need each day or for each catheterization.

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