

Patient Education

UWMC Rehab Medicine Clinic/HMC Rehab Medicine Clinic



Self-Catheterization for Women

How to catheterize yourself using the clean technique

This handout gives step-by-step instructions for women to put in a catheter using the clean technique.

Catheterize yourself every 4 to 6 hours to keep your bladder volumes at about 12 to 13 ounces (about 1½ cups). This is the best volume for keeping your bladder and kidneys healthy.

Steps

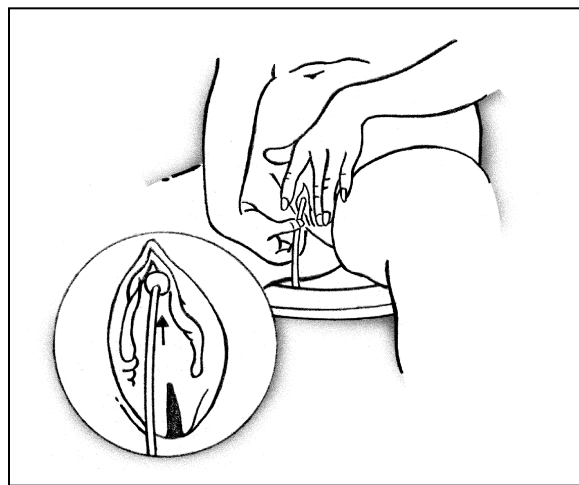
1. Gather the supplies you will need:
 - Baby wipes that contain disinfectant, towelettes, or a clean, soapy washcloth and a clean, wet washcloth for rinsing
 - A clean, dry towel
 - A container for your urine if you are not using a toilet
 - A catheter (#14 French or your choice)
 - A mirror, if you are still learning how to do this
2. Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 30 seconds. You may use hand sanitizer if your hands are already clean.

Do **not** use hand sanitizer if your hands are soiled. Use soap and water instead. Let your hands dry completely before you start to insert the catheter.
3. Sit, stand, or lie down in a way that works for you. If you are in bed, place a towel under your hips to protect the bedding.



Steps 4 and 5

4. Use the hand you do **not** write with to separate your *labia* (the folds of skin around the opening of your vagina).
5. Wash your *urinary meatus* (the opening your urine comes out of) with a towelette or soapy washcloth. Rinse with a wet washcloth if you are using soap. Always wipe from front to back (downward).



Steps 6 and 7

6. Hold the catheter in the hand you write with and insert it into your urinary meatus. Direct it upward and forward toward your *umbilicus* (belly button) until urine flows freely. Then, gently push the catheter in 1 more inch to help the urine drain.
7. Hold the catheter in place until your bladder has drained. When your urine flow begins to slow down, slowly pull the catheter out. As you do this, you may have more urine flow as pockets of urine drain.
8. Remove the catheter. Wash it in warm, soapy water and rinse it **thoroughly**. Then air-dry it and store it in a clean, dry paper or cloth towel or a re-sealable plastic bag until you need it again.
 - Throw the catheter away if it changes color, cracks, becomes hard to clean, or if you have been told to use a new catheter each time.
 - If you use a red rubber catheter, you will clean your catheters in a different way or rinse and save them so they can be sterilized again.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

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Using an Extension Tube

You may want to use an extension tube to help direct your urine into the toilet or other container. If you use an extension tube:

- Separate the tube from the catheter, then clean the tube just like the catheter (see step 8).
- Throw the tube away when it becomes cloudy, cracked, or sticky.
- Store the tube in the same place as your catheter.

When to Call Your Nurse or Doctor

Watch your urine for changes. Call your nurse or doctor if your urine:

- Changes color
- Smells different
- Is cloudy
- Has sediment in it

Also call your nurse or doctor if you have:

- Bleeding
- Back or stomach pain and a fever
- Trouble passing the catheter or increased discomfort when you pass the catheter

Notes

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