

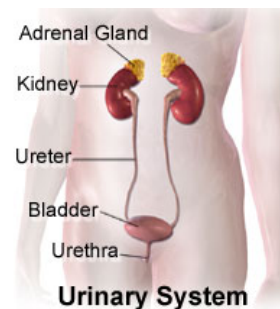
NC Women's Hospital
Urinary Self-Catheterization

What is urinary self-catheterization?

Placement of a catheter (small thin plastic tube) into the bladder to allow urine to drain out of the body. The catheter is inserted into the urethra (a tube in the body that connects the bladder to the outside of the body).

Why do I need to catheterize myself?

Either you are unable to urinate on your own, or when you urinate your bladder is not completely emptying itself of urine. This is temporary, and can sometimes happen after a difficult vaginal delivery or after a delivery by cesarean section.



How often do I need to catheterize myself?

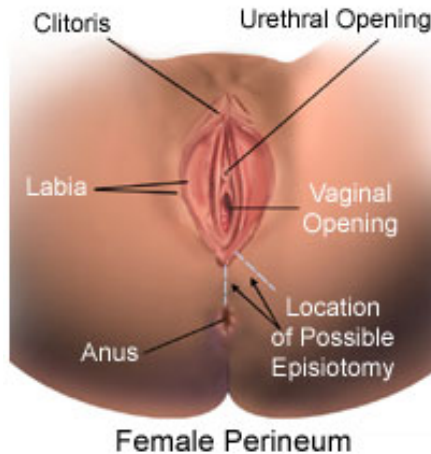
It is important to not let your bladder get too full. You should try to urinate at least every 4 hours while you are awake and before you go to sleep. Each time after you urinate you *must* catheterize yourself to make sure your bladder is empty. Measure and write down the amount each time that you urinate on your own, and the amount from each self catheterization.

What supplies do I need?

- Catheter
- Lubricant, such as K-Y Jelly™ (*not* Vaseline™ or petroleum jelly)
- Urine hat (container to collect and measure urine)
- Baby wipes or soap, warm water and a washcloth
- Mirror and good lighting

How do I perform self-catheterization?

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water
- Urinate into the urine hat and write down the measured amount
- Empty the urine in the hat
- Place lubricant on the tip of the catheter
- Clean yourself; separate your labia and wipe front-to-back, using either baby wipes or using a warm soapy washcloth
- Using a mirror, hold your labia open with one hand; find your urethral opening (see picture below)



- Use your other hand to slowly insert the tip of the catheter into the urethral opening (hold the catheter so the end is directed into the urine hat); gently push the catheter until urine begins to come out.
- After the urine stops flowing, pinch the catheter and slowly pull it out. Keep the end of the catheter pointed up to prevent urine from leaking out.
- Write down the amount of urine from the catheterization
- Wash the catheter with liquid soap, rinse well and let it air dry on a towel. Store it in a clean dry place until ready for next use.

Important Tips:

- *If you have difficulty inserting or removing the catheter:* if it is painful, try using more lubricant. Pain can also be caused by muscle spasms. Try to relax by taking a deep breath in as you insert or remove the catheter.
- *If no urine comes out of the catheter:* use a mirror to make sure that the catheter is in the urethra and not the vagina. If you are sure that it is in the right place, try gently pushing it further in or pulling back.
- *If there is blood in the catheter or in your urine:* this can be caused by dryness. Try using more lubricant. Make sure that you drink plenty of fluids. Blood can also be due to infection. Call your provider if you think that you have an infection.

When can I stop urinary self-catheterization?

You may stop catheterizing yourself when:

- The amount that you urinate on your own is more than 200mL two times in a row.
- The amount of urine from catheterization each time is less than 100mL.

When should I call my provider?

Call your provider if you have signs of a urinary tract infection (UTI):

- Pain with urination
- Fever/chills
- Back pain
- Cloudy or bad smelling urine
- Blood in your urine
- Frequent bladder spasms

If you have questions or problems during business hours (Monday – Friday, 8:30a.m.-4:30p.m.) please call the nurse advice line at 919-966-6823. If it is after hours you should call the hospital operator at 919-966-4131 and ask them to page the OB/GYN provider that is on-call.