

# Patient Education

## Urinary Self-Catheterization

### What is urinary self-catheterization?

A catheter (small thin plastic tube) is placed through the urethra (opening where urine [pee] comes out of your body) into the bladder to allow urine to drain out of the body.

### Why do I need to catheterize myself?

When you are not able to urinate on your own or too little urine comes out.

### How often do I need to catheterize myself?

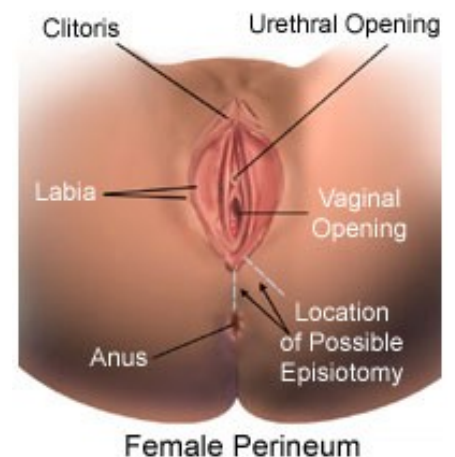
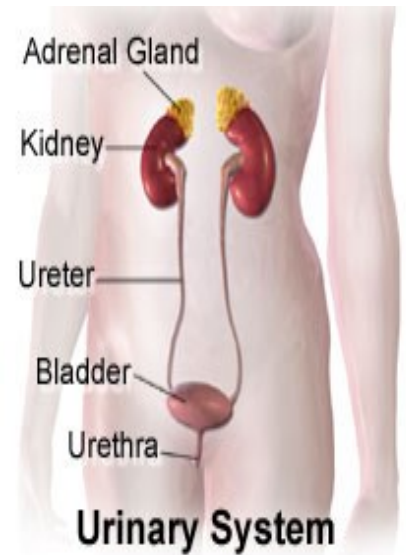
It is important to not let your bladder get too full. You should try to urinate at least every 4 hours while awake and before sleeping. Each time after you urinate you *must* catheterize yourself to make sure your bladder is empty.

### 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
- Place lubricant on the tip (end) 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 container); 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?**

If you are unable to catheterize yourself

If no urine comes out with urination or catheterization and bladder is painful

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

bladder spasms (pain)

*If you have questions or problems during business hours please call your provider. If it is after hours you should call the hospital operator at 984-974-4131 and ask them to page the URO/GYN provider that is on-call.*

*Approved by the NC Women's Hospital Patient Education Committee, July 22, 2009, revised November 2015, revised December 16, 2018*