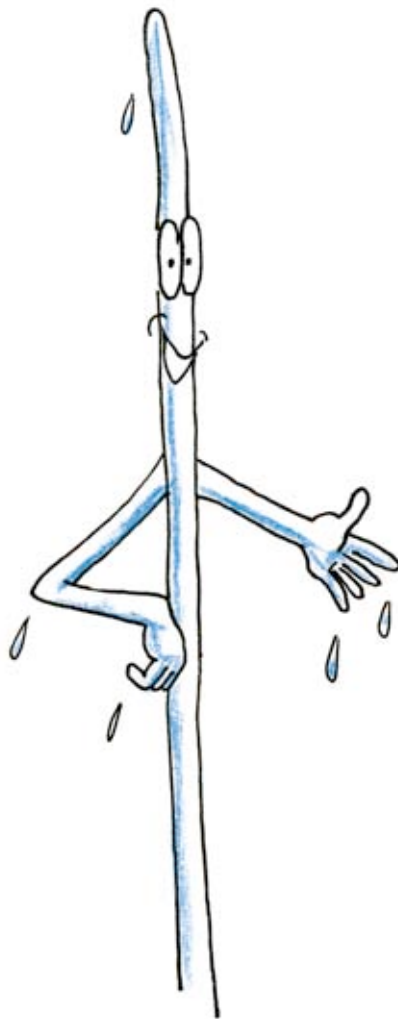


**A Child's guide to Clean
Intermittent Catheterization
Girls**

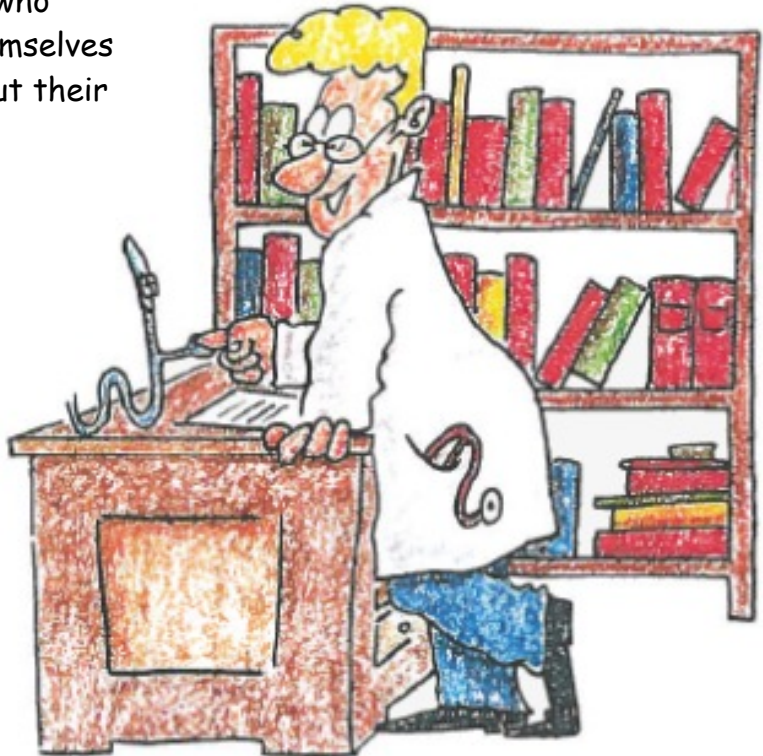


Introduction

Probably you have just heard that you have to learn to catheterize your bladder. Most children are worried, frightened or scared when the nurse or doctor tells them that they have to learn to catheterize themselves. Or maybe your mom or dad has been catheterizing you and now you want or need to learn to do it yourself.

This educational material has been written to help you understand why you need to learn to catheterize and it answers your questions about Clean Intermittent Catheterization, (commonly referred to as CIC).

Three children who catheterize themselves will tell you about their experiences.



What is CIC?

Clean Intermittent Catheterization means the routine insertion of a hollow plastic tube (catheter) into the urethra, past the sphincter muscle, and into the bladder. Because the catheter is hollow, urine will flow through it and the bladder will empty. It must be done at regular intervals, just as someone who urinates (pees) normally does. It is best if done on a set schedule each day.

The Urinary System

The urinary system contains two kidneys, two ureters, the bladder and the urethra. The kidneys filter the blood and produce urine. The urine travels from the kidneys down the ureters and into the bladder, where it is stored until being emptied during urination (peeing) or catheterization. The urethra is the tube that empties the urine out of the body.

- 1, 2: Kidneys*
- 3, 4: ureters*
- 5: bladder*
- 6: urethra*



When the bladder is full, the brain sends a signal down the spinal cord to the bladder, causing it to empty. For children with spinal cord issues, the signal from the bladder to the brain gets interrupted, making them unable to empty their bladder.

If the bladder cannot empty itself, urinary tract infections, as well as incontinence (wetting) or the involuntary loss of urine can occur. When urine stays in the bladder and is not emptied, bacteria can grow, causing infections that can lead to illness. Research has shown that intermittent catheterization helps reduce urinary tract infections, controls urinary leakage (incontinence) and prevents kidney and bladder damage.

Sometimes when children cannot empty their bladder, the bladder fills and the pressure in the bladder rises. If the bladder pressure gets too high, urine can back up the ureters to the kidneys causing reflux. The higher pressure can also prevent the kidneys from draining urine into the bladder properly. The urine that refluxes up to the kidneys or fails to drain can cause an infection and can possibly damage the kidneys. By performing intermittent catheterization regularly, the bladder pressures are lowered, reducing the risk of reflux, infection and damage to the kidneys.



Devany

Devany is an 11-year old girl who catheterizes twice a day.

"The doctor told me when I was seven years old that I had to learn to catheterize myself. I didn't know what that was, but they explained it to me and showed me pictures and stories about children who already are doing it. I was pretty scared but it went fine the first time when I had to do it myself. Nowadays, it's going really well, it's just a part of my life."

Are there any alternatives to catheterization?

When the doctor decides you need to learn to catheterize yourself, perhaps you have tried different treatments already, such as bladder training, biofeedback of your pelvic floor muscles, timed voiding, medications or even surgery. Despite these treatments, incontinence or urinary tract infections continue. This is why your doctor wants you to learn to catheterize.

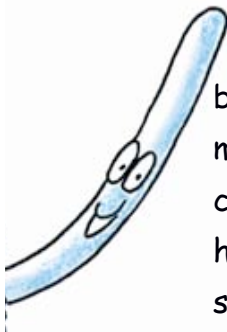


Luc

Luc is a 12 year old boy who catheterizes.

"I had to learn to catheterize because I had a scar in my urethra which made my urethra narrower. This made it difficult for me to empty my bladder. The first time I catheterized I was pretty scared. I had never done it before and it was difficult. But then I relaxed my muscles and it was easy to pass the catheter. I relaxed by thinking of something else like going on vacation or going to an amusement park."

Does CIC hurt, or does it cause infections?



Catheterizing yourself may feel uncomfortable at first but it doesn't hurt. At first it feels strange or weird but by making sure that you put enough lubricating gel on the catheter the catheter will pass very smoothly. You can't harm your bladder or urethra when you follow the right steps.

Some children believe that catheterizing causes more bladder infections than they had before starting catheterization. This is not so! Draining the urine from the bladder reduces your risk of urinary tract infection. You need to be very careful about cleanliness though. In order to avoid infections, it is very important to wash your hands beforehand and use clean or new disposable catheters. Do not touch the catheter tip before inserting it.

How often do I need to perform CIC?

Your nurse or doctor will tell you how often you need to catheterize yourself throughout the day. Always make sure you catheterize immediately after waking up in the morning and before going to bed, just as you would do if you were peeing on your own.

Do I need to tell my friends that I catheterize?

You will find out that being open about your need for catheterization will help you to accept it. When you talk about it and do not hide the catheters, it will help you and it helps your friends too. They will learn that CIC belongs to you and that it doesn't make you different. Remember, it helps your kidneys and bladder function well. Some children write a paper or give a talk in class in order to explain things to other children. They also may show their catheters to friends.

Takeyna

Takeyna is a 12 year old girl who catheterizes.



"I told my friends that I catheterize. When I explained it to my friends they said okay, it's fine. It was a bit scary at first when I started talking about it, but now I am happy I did. If you explain it to your friends they understand it better and it will be all right."

CIC away from home.

When you have to catheterize more than twice a day you will probably have to do CIC at school, and you will find that toilets in places other than home are not always comfortable for performing CIC. At school use the bathroom in the nurse's office, as there is more privacy there. When you are away from home for several hours, take as many catheters as you will need with you while you are away. Take an extra plastic baggy or container to put the dirty catheters in so they may be cleaned later, if need be, when you're at home. Take extra handy wipes to clean hands in case the bathroom has run out of soap. It may be cleaner and easier to wash your hands with the wipes after getting set up to catheterize, but before touching the clean catheter.

How could I be sure I have completely emptied my bladder?

It is important to be aware of the urine output you get from the catheter. For the first few weeks, it is a good idea to measure the amount of urine drained with each catheterization. If the output drops significantly, it may be due to different reasons:

- Perhaps the catheter is not being inserted completely into the bladder and some urine remains in the bladder. Make sure to move the catheter around a bit. Try rotating the catheter gently before withdrawing it completely in a downward direction.



- You may be drinking less than you should. Make sure you drink enough fluids especially in warm weather.

What if I notice some blood in the urine when I catheterize?

A little bit of blood in the catheter may mean that you scraped the urethra or bladder when you inserted the catheter. When this occurs, make sure you use an adequate amount of lubricating gel. At other times it may mean that you could have a urinary tract infection. If it continues, contact your doctor.

Clean Intermittent Catheterization Instructions for Girls

Many girls have learned to catheterize themselves as early as five years of age. It may take you time to locate the proper opening. It is advisable that you use a mirror initially to help with catheterization. With support and

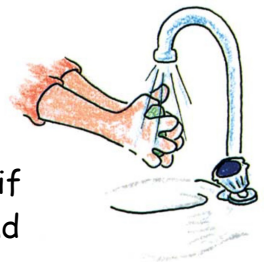


encouragement, you will eventually perform catheterization by touch and feel.

CIC can be done lying down or sitting on the toilet.

1. Gather the following materials:
 - New catheter in sealed wrapper or a clean catheter
 - Water soluble lubricant
 - Something to cleanse the area around the urethra: soap, water and a washcloth, a baby wipe or towelette
 - A container to collect the urine if you are lying down
 - Hand towel

2. Inspect catheter before use. If catheter or package is damaged throw it away and take another.



3. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or if these are not available, use an antibacterial hand cleaner.

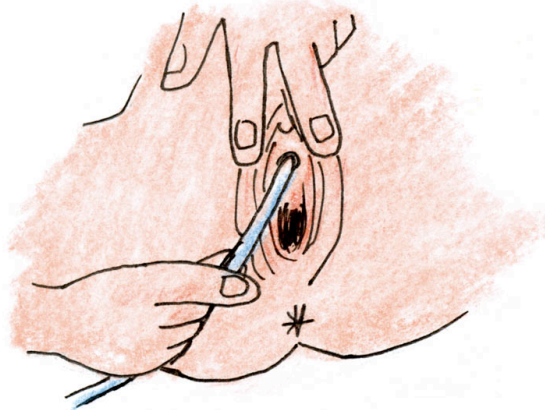
4. Lay out the equipment, opening the water soluble lubricant and catheter package. Apply a large amount of lubricant to the tip and first inch of the catheter.

5. Position yourself in a comfortable position. For younger girls, lying down with the knees bent in a "frog-like"



position works well. Older girls can sit on the toilet with their legs spread far apart.

6. Using your thumb and forefinger of the hand you do not write with (your non-dominant hand), separate the labia or folds of skin that cover over the vagina and locate the urethra or the place where the pee comes from.
7. With the labia separated, wash the urethral area from front to back thoroughly with soap water and washcloth or a baby wipe or towelette. Never go back and forth over the urethral opening. Repeat washing from front to back with the different areas of the washcloth, a new baby wipe or towelette two more times.



8. With your dominant hand, the one you write with, insert the catheter gently into the urethral opening. Continue to insert the catheter until urine begins to flow. Hold it in place until urine stops flowing.



9. When urine stops flowing, slowly rotate the catheter between your fingers while withdrawing the catheter in a downward direction. If urine starts to flow again, stop withdrawing the catheter and let the urine drain out completely. When the bladder is empty and no more urine drips out of the catheter either pinch the catheter closed or place a finger on the end and, finish removing the catheter in a downward direction.



10. Well done!



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