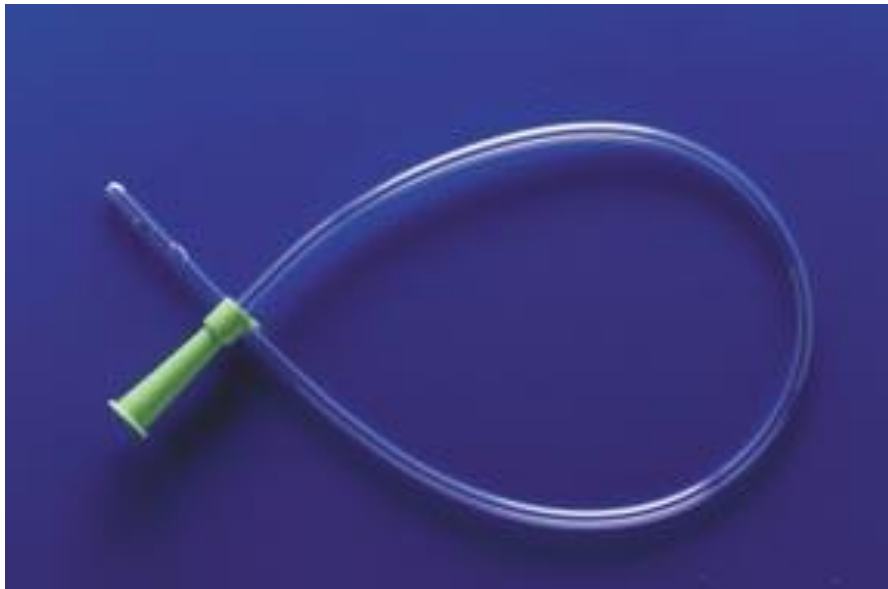

Self-catheterisation in female patients: frequently-asked questions

What is self-catheterisation?

Self-catheterisation means that you insert a small, flexible plastic tube into the bladder. The urine flows out through this tube which is then removed and washed. By emptying the bladder regularly in this way, you will prevent a build-up of stagnant urine and should feel more comfortable. You will also be keeping the kidneys and bladder healthy by preventing urinary infections. Some people find that they have less difficulty preventing themselves becoming wet using this technique.



What equipment do I need?

- A catheter – supplied at first by the outpatient clinic and then available to order on prescription from your GP
- Baby wipes
- Shaving mirror and a good light are helpful, particularly at first
- A bottle, dish or plastic box to catch the urine

How do I do it?

- Sit on a towel with a plastic sheet just underneath or lie on the bed if you prefer
- Remove your pants and tuck other clothing out of the way

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- Wash your hands thoroughly
 - Lie on your back, comfortably propped up with your knees wide apart. Using the light and mirror to help you, find the opening of the urethra which is in front of the vagina and behind the clitoris
 - If it is difficult to see the hole, draw the labia forwards and upwards whilst separating them with your fingers. It is also possible to feel the urethra which is like a small pit on a sensitive mound
 - Clean inside the labia from front to back using baby wipes
 - Hold the catheter 2 inches from its tip and insert it until urine flows (usually needs insertion for 2-3 inches)
 - If no urine comes out, the catheter is probably in the vagina. This will do no harm and simply means taking it out and looking again for the urethra, just further forwards
 - When urine stops flowing, insert the catheter a little further and turn it gently to obtain any remaining urine
 - Withdraw the catheter slowly
 - Rinse the catheter under running water, dry on a clean tissue and store in a clean plastic bag open to the air if possible

Who can I contact for more help or information?

Oncology Nurses

- Uro-Oncology Nurse Specialist
01223 586748
- Bladder cancer Nurse Practitioner (haematuria, chemotherapy & BCG)
01223 274608
- Prostate cancer Nurse Practitioner
01223 274608

Non-Oncology Nurses

- Urology Nurse Practitioner (incontinence, urodynamics, catheter patients)
01223 274608 or 586748

Patient Advice & Liaison Centre (PALS)

- Telephone
+44 (0)1223 216756 or 257257
+44 (0)1223 274432 or 274431
- PatientLine
*801 (*from patient bedside telephones only*)
- E mail
pals@addenbrookes.nhs.uk
- Mail
PALS, Box No 53
Addenbrooke's Hospital
Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 2QQ

Chaplaincy and Multi-Faith Community

- Telephone
+44 (0)1223 217769
- E mail
derek.fraser@addenbrookes.nhs.uk
- Mail
The Chaplaincy, Box No 105
Addenbrooke's Hospital
Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 2QQ

MINICOM System ("type" system for the hard of hearing)

- Telephone
+44 (0)1223 274604

Access Office (travel, parking & security information)

- Telephone
+44 (0)1223 586969

Other information

This patient information leaflet provides input from specialists, the British Association of Urological Surgeons, the Department of Health and evidence-based sources as a supplement to any advice you may already have been given by your GP. Alternative treatments can be discussed in more detail with your urologist or Specialist Nurse.

How can I get information in alternative formats?

Please ask if you require this information in other languages, large print or audio format: 01223 216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Polish Informacje te można otrzymać w innych językach, w wersji dużym drukiem lub audio. Zamówienia prosimy składać pod numerem: 01223 216032 lub wysyłając e-mail: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Portuguese Se precisar desta informação num outro idioma, em impressão de letras grandes ou formato áudio por favor telefone para o 01223 216032 ou envie uma mensagem para: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Russian Если вам требуется эта информация на другом языке, крупным шрифтом или в аудиоформате, пожалуйста, обращайтесь по телефону 01223 216032 или на вебсайт patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

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- Cantonese** 若你需要此信息的其他語言版本、大字體版或音頻格式，請致電 01223 216032 或發郵件到：patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk
- Turkish** Bu bilgiyi diger dillerde veya büyük baskılı ya da sesli formatta isterseniz lütfen su numaradan kontak kurun: 01223 216032 veya asagıdaki adrese e-posta gönderin:
patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk
- Bengali** এই তথ্য বাংলায়, বড় অক্ষরে বা অডিও টেপে পেতে চাইলে দয়া করে 01223 216032 নম্বরে ফোন করুন বা patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk ঠিকানায় ই-মেইল করুন।



Addenbrooke's is smoke-free. You cannot smoke anywhere on the site. Smoking increases the severity of some urological diseases and increases the risk of post-operative complications. For advice on quitting, contact your GP or the NHS smoking helpline free on 0800 169 0 169

Document history

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