

Self-Catheterization for Women

Your doctor has prescribed self-catheterization for you because you are having trouble urinating naturally. This problem can be caused by injury, disease, infection, or other conditions. Self-catheterization simply means inserting a clean catheter (a thin, flexible tube) into the bladder to empty urine. This helps you empty your bladder when it won't empty by itself or empty all the way. This is what you'll need:

- **Soap and warm water or a moist towelette**
- **Clean Catheter**
- **Water-soluble lubricating jelly (not petroleum jelly)**
- **Mirror**
- **Toilet or basin**



1. Lubricate the Catheter

- First wash your hands and your penis. Use warm, soapy water or a moist towelette.
- Lubricate 2-4 inches of the catheter tip. Place the other end in the toilet or basin



2. Insert the Catheter

- Spread the labia (the lips or folds at the opening of your vagina). Use a mirror or your index finger to find the urethra (urinary tract opening).
- Slowly insert the catheter in your urethra. If it doesn't go in, take a deep breath and bear down as if trying to urinate. If you feel a sharp pain, remove the catheter and try again.



3. Empty Your Bladder

- When the urine starts to flow, stop inserting the catheter
- When the urine stops flowing, slowly remove the catheter

4. Wash the Catheter

- Wash the catheter in mild soap and water. Rinse it well. Be sure to run water through it. Then let it air-dry.
- Wash your hands. If you use a basin, wash it out.



Call your doctor right away if you have any of the following:

- Fever above 100.0°F (37.8°C) or chills
- Burning in the urinary tract, penis, or pubic area
- Nausea and vomiting
- Aching in the lower back
- Cloudy urine; sediment or mucus in the urine
- Bloody (pink or red) or foul smelling urine