Self-Catheterization for Males

This information explains how males can perform self-catheterization.

A catheter is a flexible tube that drains urine from your bladder. Your doctor has instructed you to insert your catheter yourself. You will do this by inserting the catheter into your urethra (tube that carries urine out of your body), which is in your penis. Self-catheterization will allow you to drain your urine at home.

Most people do their self-catheterization in the bathroom, into the toilet. You will get a container to collect your urine, in case you need to self-catheterize somewhere else.

Your nurse will let you know how to get new catheters for your next catheterization. If you have to, you can reuse the same catheter but it’s better to use a new one.

Self-Catheterization Instructions

Follow these steps to help you self-catheterize.

1. Clean your hands. If you’re washing your hands with soap and water, wet your hands, apply soap, rub them together...
thoroughly for 15 seconds, then rinse. Dry your hands with a disposable towel, and use that same towel to turn off the faucet.

- If you’re using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, be sure to cover all of your hands with it, rubbing them together until they’re dry.

2. Gather your supplies on a clean surface. You will need:
   - Catheter
   - Water-based lubricant (such as K-Y Jelly®)
   - Paper towels
   - A container to collect your urine in, if you’re not able to catheterize in a bathroom.

3. Clean your penis with soap and water. Make sure to dry the tip of your penis completely before catheterizing.

4. Stand in front of or sit on a toilet. You can also insert your catheter in a private room using a container to collect your urine. Do not insert your catheter while standing in the shower.

5. Apply lubricant on the catheter. Hold the catheter in your dominant hand.

6. With your other hand, hold your penis. Aim your penis downward at a 45-degree angle. Make sure to stand over a toilet or a container to catch the urine that will flow from the
catheter.

7. Insert the catheter slowly and gently into your penis. Push the catheter in until you see urine flowing from the catheter. To be safe, push it in another inch once you see urine flowing. That way, you will be sure it’s fully inside your bladder.

8. Hold the catheter in place until the urine flow stops.

9. Slowly take the catheter out of your penis. The catheter may drain some more urine on its way out so continue to stand over the toilet. If you see urine draining out, stop pulling out the catheter and let the urine finish draining. Then, continue to take the catheter out.

10. If you’re going to reuse your catheter, clean it with soap and water. Let it air dry on a clean surface. Once it’s dry, store the catheter in a clean place covered with a paper towel or in a zip lock bag. If you’re not going to reuse your catheter, you can throw it away.

11. Clean your hands following the instructions in step 1.

Remember to always carry an extra catheter with you in case of an emergency.

**After Your Self-Catheterization**

- Your penis may feel irritated after you catheterize. This is normal.
You may have some bleeding during or after your catheterization.

- Your urine may turn light pink due to this blood, so drink some water. This will flush your bladder.

**Call Your Doctor or Nurse if You Have:**

- A temperature of 101° F (38.3°C) or higher
- Chills
- Pelvic pain
- Pain on the side of your body by your ribs
- Trouble inserting or removing the catheter
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Any other problems or questions
If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.