

## Re-using catheters

A clean technique can be used at home. This means as long as you are very careful to wash your hands, your urethral area and the catheter, the risk of getting a urinary tract infection is relatively low. Many people will re-use the catheter for 1-2 weeks and then throw it out.

## Important Points:

- Follow a schedule for catheterizing yourself set up by your doctor/nurse. If you do not there is increased risk for an infection, urine leakage or over stretching your bladder.
- Try to keep the amount of urine drained when you catheterize to less than 400 cc. If greater than 400 cc you may need to catheterize yourself more often.
- If you have difficulty removing the catheter, try to relax, wait a few minutes and then try again.
- Drink 6-8 large glasses of fluid per day unless otherwise instructed by your doctor/nurse.
- Call your physician or nurse if you have any questions.
- Call your nurse/doctor if you experience any of these symptoms; fever, nausea, back

pain, cloudy or foul smelling urine, burning on voiding, increase in urinary urgency or frequency, blood in your urine that does not clear up 3 days after starting to catheterize, sudden pain/bleeding when inserting catheter, absence of urine for 6-8 hours, inability to keep catheterized volumes within recommended amount.

## Signs and Symptoms of when you may need to catheterize more often:

- Perspiration
- Feeling cold/clammy
- Feeling of fullness in the bladder
- Constant or consistent dribbling of urine

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# How to Catheterize Yourself: For Women





## Before Catheterizing Yourself:

Gather your supplies before starting and place within reach on a table/counter top:

- A clean plastic female catheter (French size 12-14)
- Clean washcloth/paper towel with soapy water
- Clean washcloth/paper towel with warm water, no soap to rinse
- Soap and water to wash hands
- A mirror if needed (e.g. small cosmetic mirror on a stand)
- Water soluble lubricant not Vaseline (e.g. Muko or KY Jelly)
- a large measuring container
- Clean paper towels
- Tupperware or other clean container with a lid

## Getting ready:

- First, try to pass your urine into a measuring container
- You can catheterize while sitting on a toilet or propped halfway up on a bed using pillows and measuring container between your legs
- Wash your hands with soap and water
- If using a new catheter, open the packaging so the catheter rests on top
- Place some lubricant on a clean paper towel

## How to Locate the Urethral Opening:

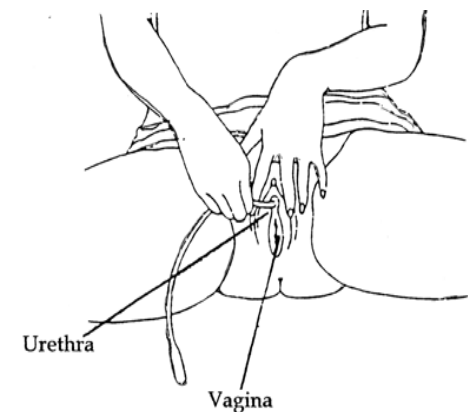
Women have three openings including the urethra, vagina and anus. The urethra or the opening through which urine passes is the opening closest to the front of a woman's body. The urethra can be located through touch using a clean finger. The urethra is immediately below the clitoris and is softer to the touch than the clitoris. A mirror may be helpful to become familiar with your body.

## To do the Catheterization:

1. Roll the tip of the catheter in the lubricating jelly so that it is covered halfway up with lubricant.
2. Wet washcloth with warm soapy water
3. Spread your labia (or folds of skin) with your non-dominant hand
4. Using the washcloth in your dominant hand, wash well front to back.



5. Rinse the area well with the wet washcloth/paper towel.
6. Wash hands with soap and water.
7. Sit on the toilet or in bed with measuring container.
8. Hold the catheter like a pencil in your dominant hand, about halfway from the tip of the catheter.
9. Keeping the labia open with your other hand locate the urethra. Slowly and gently put the catheter into the urethra about 7.6 cm (3 inches) or until the urine starts to flow. Allow all the urine to drain.



10. While removing the catheter if urine starts to flow, pause and allow it to drain.
11. Wash the catheter (see below).
12. Wash your hands.