



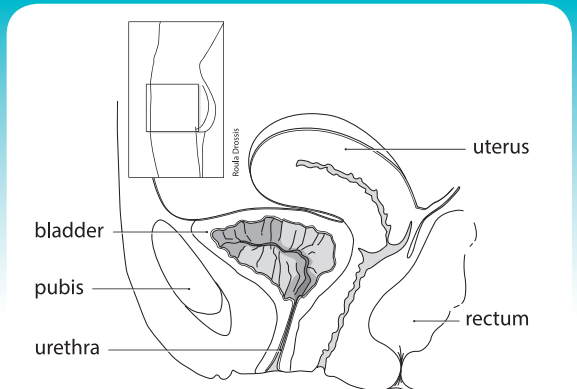
Clean intermittent self-catheterization for women (CIC)

CIC is a safe and useful way to help empty your bladder when you have trouble urinating. Many women find that their health and daily living are better with CIC.

What is clean intermittent self-catheterization (CIC)?

- Urine is made by the kidneys and stored in the bladder.
- When you need to urinate, the bladder opening relaxes so that the bladder muscle can squeeze the urine through the urethra and out of the body. (See diagram *Bladder anatomy*).
- Clean intermittent self-catheterization (CIC) helps you to empty your bladder when you have trouble urinating.
- Your doctor has suggested CIC for you as a way to avoid the problems and costs that can come with having a “full-time” catheter (one that stays in). (See section *What will I need to do a CIC?*)
- It is often possible to learn how to put in and take out a catheter by yourself (self-catheterization or CIC). Doing CIC may avoid the problems of a full-time catheter.
- In some cases, you may need a full-time catheter in your bladder. In this case, your urine will empty into a bag that is often attached to your leg.
 - After several weeks, a full-time catheter may develop problems such as:
 - An infection in your bladder and the growth of “stones”
 - Pain or soreness from having a catheter in your urethra
 - The hassle of collecting urine in a bag

Bladder anatomy



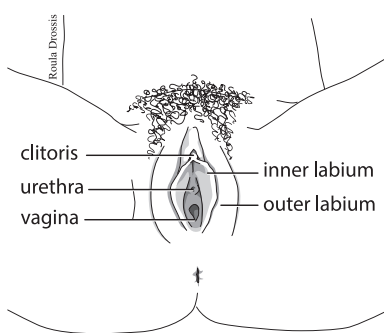
What does it mean to have a CIC?

- Sometimes, you cannot empty your bladder the way it should be emptied or urine may not flow out at all.
 - Most of the time when this happens, something is blocking the opening (sometimes after pelvic surgery) or the bladder muscle is too weak to squeeze out the urine.
 - To help you urinate, a plastic or rubber tube (called a catheter) is passed through the urethra to the bladder. (See section *What will I need to do a CIC?*)
- ## What will I need to do a CIC?
1. A catheter is a clear plastic or soft rubber tube that is sold in different sizes: 12, 14 or 16 French (the name used for the sizes). Your doctor will let you know which size you will need.
 2. A lubricant (to make a surface more smooth or slippery) makes putting in the catheter easier.
 - The type of lubricant that you will need dissolves in water and is called a water-soluble lubricant (such as KY Jelly™ or Muko Jelly™)
 - **It is important NOT to use petroleum jelly like Vaseline™ or mineral oils as they do not dissolve in the body.**
 - It is also possible to buy catheters that come already lubricated (pre-lubricated).
 3. A soapy washcloth, throw-away wet wipes, or unscented diaper wipes
 4. Clean, dry towel
 5. A bottle or bowl to collect urine if you wish
 6. A hand mirror to see what you are doing
 7. A case for you to carry your catheter - like a plastic sandwich bag (Ziploc® bag) or travel holder for a toothbrush.

What are the steps to doing a CIC?

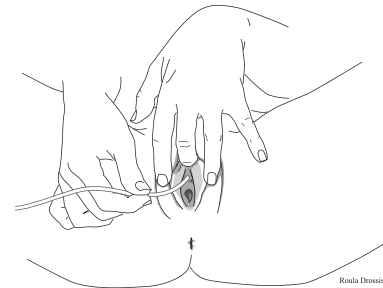
- You can usually avoid an infection by keeping areas clean but they do not have to be completely germ-free (no disinfectant or gloves are required).
 - You may use any clean washroom to put in your catheter. It would help to have clean counter space nearby.
1. Get out the supplies you will need and put them where you can reach them.
 2. Wash your hands well with soap and water, rinse and dry. It is best to keep your fingernails short and clean.
 3. Get into a comfortable position. You may catheterize yourself by:
 - standing with one foot on a stool or a toilet bowl or
 - sitting in the front of or on a toilet seat or
 - propping yourself up in bed.
 4. Spread your thighs wide apart and separate your vaginal labia with one hand (See diagram *Female genital anatomy*). Wash from front to back with soap and water, then rinse with water and dry. You can use a wet wipe instead.
 5. Put the water-soluble lubricant onto the tip of the catheter or use a pre-lubricated catheter.
 6. Spread your labia with your non-writing hand (for example the left hand for right-handed women), spread your labia with your first finger and ring finger to open the urethra. (See diagram *View of left hand spreading the labia with right hand inserting a catheter into the urethra*)

Female genital anatomy



7. Use the tip of your middle finger to find the opening of your urethra
8. Use your writing hand to slowly place the catheter into the urethra (about 5 cm or two inches) until urine begins to flow out.
9. This process works best if you breathe slowly and relax your muscles.
10. Carefully push the catheter in another 3 cm (about one inch) to make sure that the tip is fully inside the bladder.

View of left hand spreading the labia with right hand inserting a catheter into the urethra



11. Empty the urine into a container or directly into the toilet.
12. You may find that gently “pushing down” may help your bladder to empty. Note how much urine you collect.
13. When the urine stops flowing, gently and slowly take out the catheter. Extra urine may flow out as other “pockets” are emptied.
14. You may wish to wipe the opening to your urethra with toilet paper

How often will I need to do a CIC?

- Your doctor or nurse will tell you how often you need to do CIC and that will depend on:
 - The amount and type of liquids you drink
 - The amount your bladder can actually hold
- If you drink less in the evening, there may be fewer nighttime trips to the bathroom.
- Often, you will need to do a CIC whenever you feel that your bladder is full.

How will I know when to do a CIC?

- Usually, if you use a catheter to empty your bladder, you will do a CIC:
 - about four or five times daily
 - about every four to six hours
 - when the bladder has 400 to 500 ml (13-17 oz.) of urine
- If you are urinating more than 600 ml (20 oz.) at one time, you will need to do a CIC more often.
- You may be told to do a CIC less often if you are urinating less than 200 ml (7 oz.) each time.
- If you cannot tell if your bladder is full, do a CIC.
- In time, you will have a regular schedule to help with CIC. A chart with the times you urinate and the amounts you collected will help your doctor to fine-tune your schedule.
- Sometimes you may find that you can urinate without a catheter.

Continued on next page

Sample record

Time	Volume Voided	Volume by catheter
7:30 AM	225 mL	350 mL
12:00 PM		475 mL
4:30 PM	125 mL	375 mL

How will this affect my daily life?

- You may carry on with your regular activities as usual.
- Sexual activity is also possible, but you may want to empty your bladder first.
- You should have regular bowel movements.
- You should be able to take all of your usual medication.

What if I have problems with CIC?

If you have any of the following problems, get medical help.

- If it is hard for you to find the opening to your urethra, try using a small mirror to see the area.
- If you are having trouble urinating, check that the catheter is not in your vagina.
 - If you are still learning to do a CIC and are having trouble putting in your catheter, make sure that there is not a tampon in your vagina.
 - Use a clean catheter if the first one happens to go into your vagina.

- If you feel pain when putting in your catheter or it is not going in smoothly, you may need to use more lubricant.
 - Sometimes, scar tissue inside the opening to the bladder may make it harder for you to put in your catheter.
- If you see blood on your catheter or in your urine, your urethra or bladder may be injured.
 - It could be a serious problem if you bleed non-stop or often, or your bleeding is heavy.
- Even if bacteria is found in your urine, you may not need treatment if you do not have any symptoms.
- If you have an infection:
 - You will find urinating is painful
 - You may have a fever (over 38.5°C or 101°F)
 - You may have chills
 - You may sweat more than usual
- After many tries, if you still cannot put your catheter in, you should go at once to your hospital emergency room.

Bottom Line

- CIC is a safe and helpful way for you to empty your bladder if you are having problems urinating.
- With a few weeks of practice, you should be able to put in your catheter more easily.
- Most women find that having a catheter has little effect on their daily life.
- Often, daily life is better with CIC.

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