Intermittent Self-Catheterization – Male

Your doctor has ordered intermittent self-catheterization. A catheter is a flexible hollow tube that you insert into your bladder to drain all of your urine. It is very important for you to catheterize yourself on schedule and use a new catheter each time. This helps prevent a urinary tract infection and loss of bladder control (incontinence).

You are to drain your bladder with the catheter every _____ hours.

Supplies

A doctor’s prescription is needed to purchase catheters. You can buy them at any medical supply store. For self-catheterization you will need:

- Catheter.
- Water-soluble lubricant, such as K-Y® jelly. (Do not use Vaseline®).

Preparation and Procedure

1. Wash your hands with soap and water, a towelette or waterless hand cleaner.
2. Apply water-soluble lubricant along 2 inches of the catheter, starting at the tip.
3. Retract the foreskin of your penis, if uncircumcised (See Figure 1).
4. Wash the area around the urinary opening (urethral orifice) with soap and water or moist towelettes such as baby wipes.
5. Hold your penis erect, stretching it taut (See Figure 2).
6. Insert the lubricated catheter, using firm but gentle pressure (See Figure 2). After urine starts to flow, insert the catheter about 2 more inches. When the urine flow stops, begin to slowly remove the catheter. Stop whenever urine flows and allow it to drain. Then, continue to remove the catheter.

7. Pinch the catheter just before removing it completely to avoid soiling yourself with urine.

8. If the foreskin is retracted, pull it back in place. Wipe any lubricant off your penis.

9. Wash your hands.

**Helpful Hints**

- If you cannot easily insert the catheter and you become nervous, stop and take a deep breath. Then start over. It is normal to have difficulty the first few times.
- Don’t force the catheter at any time.
- Ask your doctor how much water or other fluids you should drink each day.
- If the amount of urine increases by ½ pint or more for 2 days (even if you have increased your fluid intake), notify your doctor.
- Always carry antiseptic towelettes to clean your hands in case water is not available.
When to Call Your Doctor

Your doctor may prescribe an antibiotic to reduce the risk of infection. If you notice any of the following, contact your doctor as soon as possible.

- Unusually cloudy, foul-smelling or blood-tinged urine.
- Penile pain.
- Fever higher than 101.5°F.
- Chills.
- Leaking urine in between catheterizations.

Special Instructions

You are to catheterize after every void: □ yes □ no

Contact person: __________________________________________

Phone Number: __________________________________________

Health Information Resources

For more information, visit one of Northwestern Memorial Hospital’s Health Learning Centers. These state-of-the-art health libraries are located on the third floor of the Galter Pavilion and on the first floor of the Prentice Women’s Hospital. Health information professionals are available to help you find the information you need and provide you with personalized support at no charge. You may contact the Health Learning Centers by calling 312-926-LINK (5465) or by sending an e-mail to hlc@nmh.org.

For additional information about Northwestern Memorial Hospital, please visit our Web site at www.nmh.org.