



Intermittent self-catheterisation (ISC)

This leaflet has been designed for women who need intermittent self-catheterisation, commonly known as ISC. It explains why it is required, and what is involved.

What is ISC?

Self-catheterisation means that you put a small, soft tube (catheter) into your bladder through your urethra (water pipe) when you need to empty it. The urine flows out through the tube until your bladder is empty; you can then remove the catheter.

Why do I need to do ISC?

Self-catheterisation is used when you are unable to fully empty your bladder. It is an alternative to having a long-term catheter, which stays in place in your urethra and drains continuously.

The importance of ISC

By emptying your bladder completely, you stop a build-up of old urine which helps to prevent urine infections. It can also protect the kidneys by reducing back pressure. It is often more comfortable than a long term catheter. Some people find that it can also help prevent incontinence (urine leakage) due to an over-filled bladder.

How often will I need to do ISC?

The nurse will advise you about how frequently you will need to empty your bladder. She will ask you to complete a bladder chart before coming to your appointment.

What will happen at my first ISC appointment?

When you attend your ISC appointment, our specialist nurse will teach you how to do ISC. Please be reassured that we will always maintain discretion and your dignity. She will work with you to select the most suitable type of catheter and will demonstrate how the procedure can be done most comfortably. She will ensure that you using the correct technique and will provide you with a written information sheet.

How will I get the equipment I need for ISC?

The nurse will provide you an ISC pack that contains all the equipment you need to start doing ISC at your first appointment. The pack will include a mirror, ISC catheters, lubricating gel, and wet wipes. We will also let you know how to arrange ongoing supplies of ISC equipment once you go home.

Will I need any follow-up?

You will have a telephone follow-up appointment with the nurse after 72 hours to check how you are getting on. We will then arrange a further appointment after 4-6 weeks to assess your progress.

Further information and contact details

Please use the links below to find out more information;

- <https://www.bladderandbowel.org/tag/intermittent-self-catheterisation/>
- <https://www.baus.org.uk/userfiles/pages/files/Patients/Leaflets/ISC%20female.pdf>

In case of any concerns, queries or problems please ask to speak to:

Sonning Ward Gynaecology Clinics

Maternity Block, Level 5

Royal Berkshire Hospital

Tel: **0118 322 7191** (8am - 4pm Monday to Friday)

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

S Chikwiri (Snr Staff Nurse), RBFT Gynaecology, January 2021

Reviewed: December 2024

Next review due: December 2026