

Take care

A practical guide to bladder health

10 good tips from the nurses

Small things you can
do every day

How to clean your hands

Get a thorough hand washing
and sanitising guide

Meet a user: Ralph

How a set routine gave
him freedom



FREE
GIFT
COUPON
INSIDE

Why having a healthy bladder matters

Do you ever give much thought to your bladder? Probably not. Your bladder is one of those body parts that you probably don't think about until it stops working properly. But having a healthy and well-functioning bladder should be on top of your mind, if you want to ensure your overall health and happiness.

How do you improve your bladder health? There are lots of answers to this question, but the most common one is: you need to control your bladder – not the other way around. Although there is no magic wand or instant fix, there are many small things you can do to make a big impact. The most important one is to establish a solid routine. In this magazine, we take you through 10 simple tips that you can start implementing in your everyday life. We also help you to a better hygiene with thorough guides on handwashing and sanitising. Then you can meet our catheter users Ralph and Dina, to learn the value of following a daily catheterisation schedule and get their best advice.

We hope you find inspiration to a better life with a catheter. Remember that you can always call us for advice – no issues are too small or too big. Our phones are open [\[insert opening days + hours\]](#) at [\[insert Care contact number\]](#).

Happy reading,

[\[Insert signature\]](#)

[\[Insert: Name of sender\]](#)

[\[Insert: title of sender + email of sender\]](#)



Table of contents

04 Bladder health – why is it important?



06 Meet a user: Ralph

12 Are you worried about urinary tract infections?



13 3 things you may not know about your bladder

15 Guide: How to clean your hands

- Hand wash
- Hand disinfection

18 Meet a user: Dina



21 Keeping a positive mindset

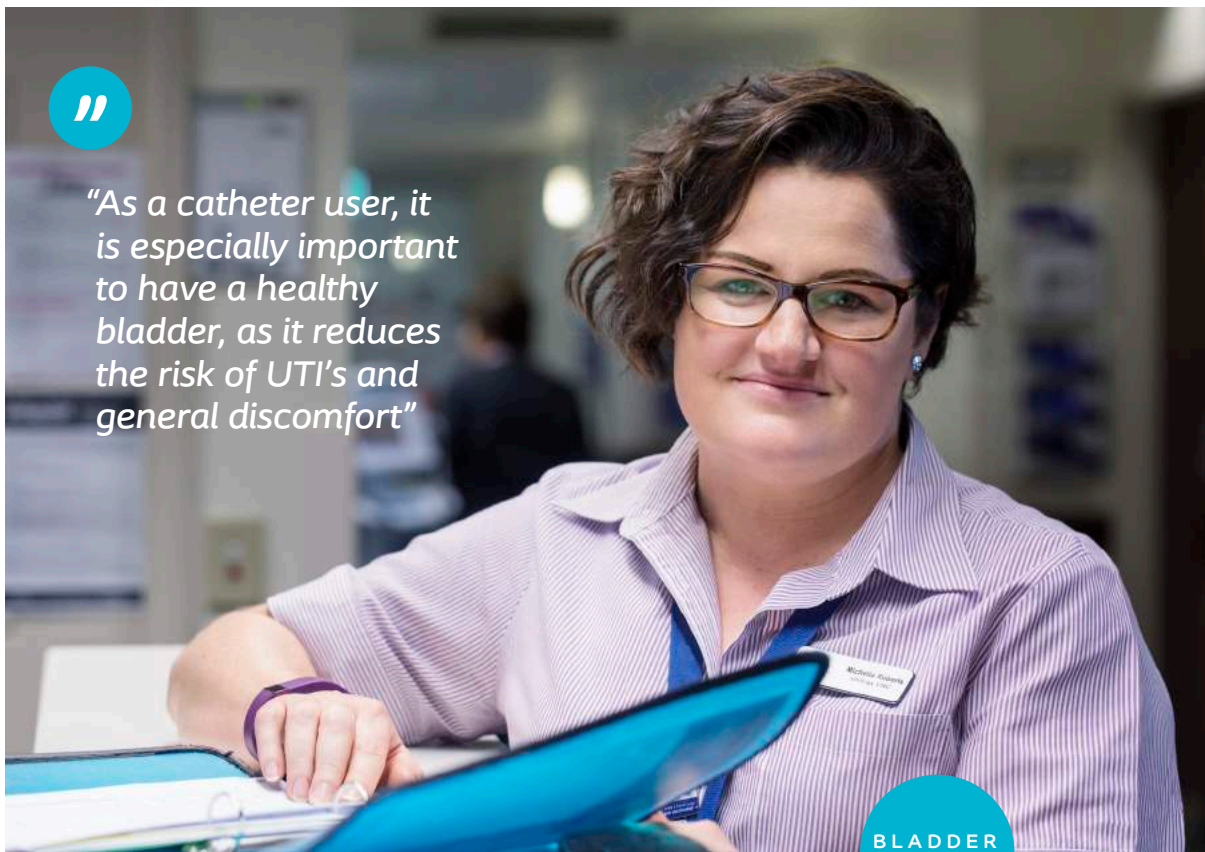
23 10 good tips: How to get a healthy bladder as a catheter user

- Habits throughout the day
- Tips for catheterisation
- Focus on your hygiene.



”

“As a catheter user, it is especially important to have a healthy bladder, as it reduces the risk of UTI’s and general discomfort”



BLADDER
HEALTH

Bladder health – why is it important?

As a catheter user, it’s important to keep your bladder healthy. But why? We asked a nurse to explain the importance of bladder health.

Why should you be interested in bladder health?

As a catheter user, it is especially important to have a healthy bladder, as it reduces the risk of urinary tract infections and general discomfort. If you have a healthy bladder, it will be you who controls your bladder and not the other way around.

What is a healthy bladder?

A healthy bladder is a well-functioning bladder that is emptied regularly and completely, so that all waste is flushed out. That way you minimise the risk of urinary tract infections coming from leftover urine in the bladder.

Why does someone get an unhealthy bladder?

There can be several reasons that a bladder may become unhealthy. It may be that you are not emptying your bladder often enough, you are not drinking enough, or your hygiene is not optimal.

Is having a healthy bladder important for both men and women?

Yes. Having a healthy bladder significantly increases quality of life for everyone - this applies to both men and women.

Which users benefit most from having a healthy bladder?

All. Some users experience worse irritations than others and will therefore experience greater improvements.

Can I do something myself to have a healthy bladder?

Yes, you can. In short, bladder health is about drinking enough fluid, emptying your bladder regularly and fully, and focusing a lot on hygiene. In this magazine we have compiled a number of good tips that are

general to all catheter users. However, all situations are individual, and if you want personalised advice for your situation, you are always welcome to call our experienced nurses.

How do I know if my bladder is unhealthy?

The most common sign that your bladder is unhealthy is a urinary tract infection. However, there are other signs and symptoms that may indicate that your bladder is unhealthy. We have gathered the most common ones here:

i

COMMON SIGNS OF AN UNHEALTHY BLADDER

- Bladder or kidney pain/discomfort
- Dark, cloudy or concentrated urine
- Greater urge to urinate which is not due to a larger intake of fluids
- Urgent, increased urge to urinate
- Unexplained change in the amount of urine
- Blood in urine
- Incontinence between urination
- Frequent urge to urinate

The above may also be indicative of other diseases, and so we always recommend contacting your own doctor or the urology department if you experience acute irritations.



”

“I have realised that structure isn't a limitation. Quite the contrary, I get the freedom to live my life the way I want, when I have a solid routine.”

RALPH

Ralph hates structure – but having a set routine gives him freedom

With the rudder in one hand and the catheter in the other, it's full speed ahead! Ralph Bramsen Eriksen has sailed most of his life and is an optimist, despite his bladder giving him headwind. Read more about how this sailor has managed to find a good routine, resulting in fewer urinary tract infections.

Ralph proudly shows off his boat, which has been voted the most beautiful of its kind in Denmark. 62-year-old Ralph has been sailing for 34 years, and the length of the boat just, which is just over eight metres, is nothing compared to the container ships he captained in his younger years after he was trained as a shipmaster in a big shipping company. Container freight requires exact logistics and planning - and is therefore predictable and boring if you ask Ralph:

“I would be able to board and be told that six months later - on 5 June at 00:34 am - we would arrive at the port of Los Angeles, off load so and so many containers and leave the harbour at 06:38 pm. And that's exactly what happened! It was like being in prison voluntarily,” says Ralph, who quit his job as captain and became a freelance skipper for wealthy Americans who needed their boats sailed from one port to another - such as from Los Angeles to Hawaii.

That was Ralph's source of income for 17 years, after which he got involved in advertis-

ing for a number of years with his own agency in Denmark, before returning to the sea. This time with his new wife Lone, with whom he started the project 'Southern Cross' - a ship with which the family and groups of struggling youths sailed the seas for four years.

Blow to the head with a hammer

Today, Ralph has a flex job as a teacher because of an old back injury. He has also been affected by some incontinence issues that he has experienced since he was a boy:

“I always urinated frequently but I never emptied my bladder. I only really let out the worst of the pressure, so today my bladder looks like this,” says Ralph and clenches his hand loosely to depict a deformed and lax bladder.

He was diagnosed with incontinence two years ago when he was admitted to the urological department at the local hospital because he was in pain and couldn't urinate. This was also when he was told that he would be using intermittent catheters for the rest of his life:





“It was like a blow to the head with a hammer. Half a year before that I had been told that at some point, I would no longer be able to walk because of my back injury. And now I would have to use a catheter too? We live in our dream home, and now I was going to be semi-disabled. At least that’s how it felt. In the beginning, I made fun of it but that was my defence mechanism, but I was actually really upset”, remembers Ralph.

Talking about it became a turning point

Ralph had contacted Coloplast Denmark and was therefore called by a nurse from Coloplast at pre-agreed intervals:

“In the beginning I refused to accept the telephone calls. I didn’t feel like talking about it. When you don’t open the envelope, you can’t see the bill! I also had a hard time talking about intimate things with a nurse from a company. But she was persistent and kept calling and asking about my urination, and at some point, she then started to give me advice based on my answers: that it shouldn’t hurt when I inserted the catheter, and that there should be no blood in the urine,” Ralph says, and continues:

“That was exactly what I needed to hear. I was brought up to believe that if you break your leg, you wait a couple of weeks before going to see a doctor, just to see if it goes away by itself. But now there was a nurse at the other end of the line who kept telling me I shouldn’t be experiencing any problems, so slowly I began to think, ‘Well - that really makes a lot of sense’. She carried on until she was sure I had the right catheter that fit me. The conversations also made me feel much better, mentally. It was exactly all the practical things I needed to talk about, because I couldn’t talk to my wife about it - she is not a nurse, after all. At the same time, I also realised that I was not the only one in the world who had to use a catheter. That is how you feel when you are down in a hole, psychologically. So, the conversations became a turning point for me.”

Needed to learn structure

It was also the nurse from Coloplast - as well as the continence nurses from the local hospital - who slowly but surely taught Ralph how to master the catheter:



THREE GREAT TIPS FROM RALPH

01

Create a good routine from the start. It makes catheterising easier and means fewer urinary tract infections.

02

Be open and tell others – family, friends and colleagues – that you use catheters. It makes both them and you accept it faster.

03

Listen to the nurses at the hospital and at Coloplast. They know what they’re talking about!



“If I am at the fridge aisle at the supermarket when the phone beeps, I use the customer toilet and catheterise”

RALPH

“Do you use the alarm on your mobile as an alarm clock? Have you thought about setting alarms to remind you to catheterise?” the nurse asked several times, Ralph remembers, and adds:

“I politely replied that it sounded like a good idea, but at the same time my brain said she could forget about that. I didn’t need to be controlled by anything. I hate structure.”

To give an example, Ralph grabs the shared calendar that hangs on the wall of the kitchen and places it on the kitchen table: “Look, here’s Lone’s column, and here’s my column. It is empty, unless Lone writes something in it”, Ralph laughs.

But three consecutive urinary tract infections caused Ralph to reconsider having some structure.

“I started setting a regular alarm on my mobile phone for 12 pm, because I sometimes forgot about that catheterisation. Morning, evening and before I went to bed” says Ralph.

Shortly after, Ralph needed to add additional time slots to his mobile phone, as a continence nurse at the local hospital found too many millilitres came out at once when Ralph catheterised, and that he therefore needed to empty his bladder 5-6 times a day.

“Now all of the times are in the mobile phone. 8 am, 12 pm, 4 pm, 6 pm, 8 pm and

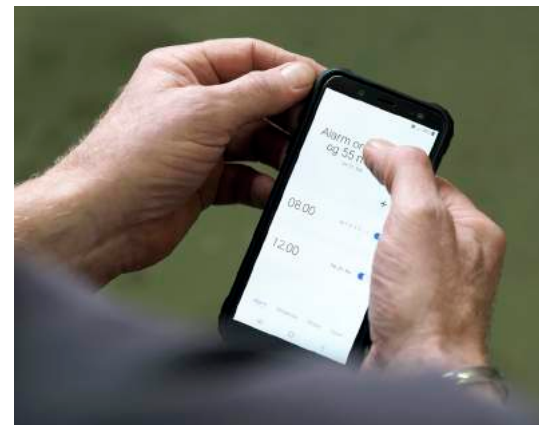


10:30 pm,” says Ralph, who is very consistent in catheterising when the mobile phone alarm goes off.

“If I am at the fridge aisle at the supermarket when the phone beeps, I use the customer toilet and catheterise. Recently, I was at a birthday party for one of my grandchildren, and I had to ask if we could please wait with the birthday song until after I had been to the bathroom. Everyone is fine with it because my family and friends know how important this is for me. The disadvantage of structure to me is, that if I don’t do it as soon as the alarm sounds, I easily forget about it until the next alarm goes off,” explains Ralph.

During the last couple of years, Ralph has become known for more than just his sailing skills in sailing circles: “I had a special wetsuit made that has a velcro opening down below. So when we race, I am able to sit with the rudder in one hand and catheterise with the other,” laughs Ralph, and gives himself a pat on the shoulder for having a good catheterisation routine.

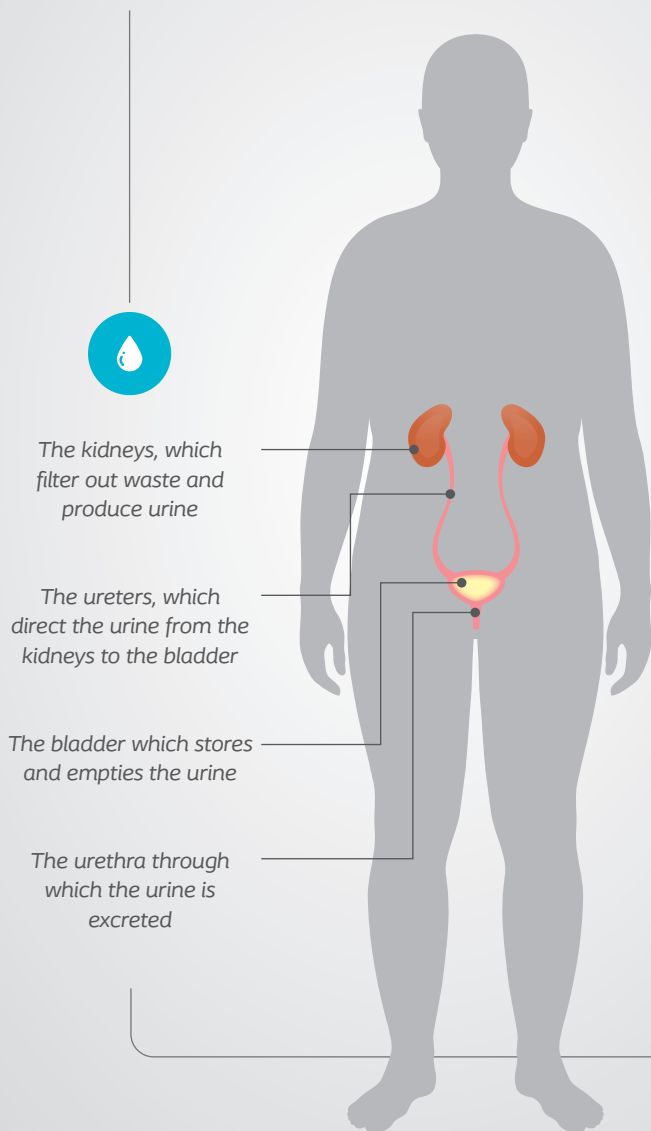
“I’ve always lived under a lucky star and taken things as they come. So, I am actually quite proud of myself. I have realised that structure isn’t a limitation. Quite the contrary, I get the freedom to live my life the way I want, when I have a solid routine.” ●



“I started setting a regular alarm on my mobile phone for 12 pm, because I sometimes forgot about that catheterisation. Also, morning, evening and before I went to bed”

RALPH

The bladder is part of the urinary tract, which consists of:



3 THINGS YOU (MAY) NOT KNOW ABOUT THE BLADDER:

01

The bladder is both a storage site for the urine and a muscle that contracts as the bladder empties.

02

The bladder is not constantly hollow (distended) like e.g. a hot water tank. It is a bag-like muscle that stretches and expands as it becomes full.

03

If the bladder is functioning normally, you feel the urge to urinate when the bladder holds around 200-250 millilitres of urine. In other words, around the same amount of liquid as two small glasses of water.

Are you worried about urinary tract infections?

As an intermittent self-catheterisation (or IC) user, you may find that you experience urinary tract infections (UTI's) from time to time. It is a common and well-known issue for many catheter users. If you have worries or feel uncertain about how to reduce your risk of UTI's, you're not alone. We therefore give you an overview of what a UTI is, how you detect it and what you can do to manage and reduce your risk of getting a UTI with the right preparation and knowledge.

What is a UTI?

UTI is an infection in the urinary tract system, which consists of the kidneys, ureters, bladder and the urethra (see illustration in the left page). Most infections occur in the bladder.

How do you get a UTI?

A UTI can occur from different reasons. If you don't have any symptoms and have a healthy bladder, then the presence of some bacteria in the urinary tract does not necessarily cause a urinary tract infection. If, however, the bacteria grow and multiply to a certain level, or if your urine is stored in the bladder for too long, it may cause an infection in the urinary tract and needs to be treated.

Who can get a UTI?

Anybody can get a UTI, though there is a higher risk if you are a catheter user as bacteria – perhaps left behind after improper hand washing, or present near

the urethral opening – are introduced into the urinary tract when you catheterise. Also, not emptying your bladder completely when you catheterise can increase the likelihood of getting a UTI. Each time you catheterise, you remove urine in the bladder along with any bacteria that might be in the urine. That's why it's important to create a regular flow through the bladder in order to "flush" it completely everytime you catheterise during the day.

How do I know if I have a UTI?

If you have any of the signs and symptoms in the 'Potential UTI Symptoms', it might mean you have gotten a UTI that needs medical attention. However, you might not feel pain and bladder irritation if the nerves to your bladder have been affected by your underlying medical condition. Remember, a UTI will only be diagnosed when you have both symptoms and bacteria in the urine. If you have any



symptoms from the list, you should always consult your healthcare provider immediately to get the appropriate diagnosis and treatment.

How can I manage and prevent infection?

There is a lot you can do to minimise the chances of developing a UTI. There are three key points to remember:

01

Make sure you use a good clean technique when you catheterise.

02

Make sure you empty your bladder fully and often enough during the day.

03

Remember to drink around 1.5-2L of water.

Making sure everything is clean when you catheterise can be difficult to manage sometimes – especially if you are away from home or not feeling very well. Following the routine your nurse has showed you is very important and will ensure correct catheterisation every time. In addition to this, however, there are some simple ways you can help to make the process easier, wherever you are. ●

Potential UTI Symptoms:

- Fever
- Pain when urinating
- Increased frequency of urination
- Increased urge to urinate
- Lower back pain (area below the ribs and above the pelvis)
- Shivering and increased muscle spasms in the body
- Dark-coloured and strong-smelling urine
- Cloudy/ bloody urine
- Unexpected urine leakage or leaking between catheterisations
- Increased episodes of Autonomic Dysreflexia (AD)

Washing and hand sanitising go hand in hand

Wash your hands for 40 to 60 seconds using soap, or 30 seconds using a hand sanitizer. This is a recommendation from both WHO and some nurses in Randers Municipality in Denmark, who also give some advice on good intimate hygiene.

Meet our continence nurses and get advice good hygiene in connection with intermittent catheters.

Good hand hygiene reduces the risk of urinary tract infections, and when asking them what the biggest challenge is, they answer unanimously: the power of habits! People are trained in clean intermittent self-catheterisation (ISC) at the hospital, but when they return home, they wash hands as they have always done.

“Why does it have to take so long?”

This is the most common question that the continence nurses are faced with when they talk about hand hygiene. Their best advice - after the rule of not touching the catheter itself - is to be patient and take time to wash and



sanitise hands. If you are in a place where you cannot wash your hands, then at the very least you should use the hand sanitiser.

When it comes to intimate hygiene - i.e. ensuring that it is clean around the urethra for catheterisation - the continence nurses' recommendation is to wash the area once a day. Washing around the urethra can be part of a daily shower, for which you can use water and possibly intimate soap.

Other than that, washing before catheterisation is only necessary if there is visible contamination e.g. if you wear a nappy or sanitary pad and old urine or stool has come in contact with area around the urethra. In this case, cleaning can be done with a disposable washcloth with water and intimate soap or possibly a wet wipe.

Moderation is key! If you wash too much down below - especially if it is with ordinary soap - you risk removing the good bacteria and the acidic environment that keeps your private area in check. ●



How to clean your hands

HAND WASH



Wet your hands with cold or lukewarm water - it will protect your hands - and then apply soap.



Rub the soap thoroughly so it foams.



Rub the back of your hands and between the fingers.



Rub palm to palm with fingers interlaced.



Wash your thumbs.



Wash your fingers, fingertips, and under the nails.



Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers. Then, rinse hands with water



Turn off the tap with the back of your hand (if possible) and wipe your hands with a clean hand towel.



40-60 sec.

It is a mechanical process of rubbing your hands against each other that removes the bacteria. The whole washing process should take at least 40 seconds.

Bonus info! Use liquid hand wash, as bacteria can remain on soap bars in its holder.



Bonus info! Use washcloths or cut a large towel into smaller pieces and use it only once to dry your hands. In that way you reduce the risk of bacteria and the amount of laundry. If that is not possible, have your own personal towel that you wash regularly and only you use.

HAND DISINFECTION



Pour 2-3ml (half-tablespoon) of hand sanitiser or gel onto your hands.



It must be enough so that you can rub your hands for 30 seconds before they dry.



Rub the hand sanitiser into your hands.



Rub the sanitiser on the back of your hands and between the fingers.



Rub palm to palm with fingers interlaced.



Rub hand sanitiser on your thumbs.



Rub hand sanitiser on your fingertips and under the nails.



30 sec.

It is a mechanical process of rubbing your hands against each other that removes the bacteria. The whole process should take about 30 seconds.



Bonus info! Your hand sanitiser should contain at least 85% alcohol (ethanol) to ensure that the bacteria are killed, and glycerol to prevent irritated and dry skin.

What to do if you cannot wash your hands before catheterisation?

Then it is important that you disinfect your hands with hand sanitiser as a minimum.

Having set times results in fewer urinary tract infections

Ever since Dina Hvidgaard was diagnosed with spina bifida as a child, she has had to use catheters when she felt the urge to urinate. But several urinary tract infections caused her to start using a system for catheterising.

Dina Hvidgaard was diagnosed with hidden spina bifida when she was 10 years old. Her peers had long since been out of nappies, but Dina couldn't control her bladder. So, she was offered an operation to make her urethra tighter.

"It stopped the incontinence, but I had to start using intermittent catheters", says Dina, who started out with long intermittent catheters, which needed to be placed in water before catheterisation.

"It was extremely impractical and hampered me a lot. If there was no water nearby, I needed to have a bottle of water with me, and when I was on holiday in the southern hemisphere, the catheter became as soft as spaghetti when the water in the tap or bottle was hot", Dina remembers, and continues:

"But I was young and didn't know any better. So, it was only after a few years when I was at the hospital for a check-up that I asked if there might be a better catheter for me."

That was it. The following years, Dina used the SpeediCath Compact from Coloplast and lived her life like other teenagers. She moved from her hometown to the big city with her boyfriend to study.

Urinary tract infections provided substance for reflection

Some people postpone or skip catheterisation when the catheter hurts or restricts their social life, which in turn increases the risk of urinary tract infections. Dina, on the other hand, persistently insisted on catheterising, because as she puts it: there was no choice - it was essential. On the other



"There is a clear correlation between catheterising approximately every four hours and urinary tract infections, which are now rare"

DINA





hand, Dina had a choice when deciding on her routines and something triggered her to set up a strict system for her catheterisations:

"A year and a half ago something happened. I started getting urinary tract infections, which otherwise had not been a problem since I got my SpeediCath Compact catheter again. It got me thinking about whether there was something I could do differently", says Dina, who suggested that it might be about her routine - or lack thereof.

"It was many years ago that I was trained to use intermittent catheters, and I probably needed to brush up on my knowledge of bladder health. I decided to manage my catheterisations according to some fixed times during the day," says Dina, and count the times when she catheterises during a workday.

First time is 5:30 in the morning when she wakes up. The next time is around 9 am when she arrives at work, then at lunch time and then again at around 4 pm before she drives home from work and again in the evening at 8 pm and before bedtime. In addition, Dina catheterises at night if she wakes up and needs to urinate. For Dina, the result of the routine was crystal clear:

"There is a clear correlation between catheterising approximately every four hours and urinary tract infections, which are now rare," Dina notes. ●



"It was many years ago that I was trained to use intermittent catheters, and I probably needed to brush up on my knowledge of bladder health"

DINA



TWO GREAT TIPS FROM DINA

01

Create an easy routine that you can remember easily. You can do this by linking it to other daily tasks you already do.

02

Drink sufficient fluids. You should not control passing urine during the day by drinking less. That increases the risk of urinary tract infections.

Keeping a positive mindset

How do you deal with the news of having to use a catheter? Does it feel overwhelming? It's not unusual to experience a wave of fear, frustration, anger or sadness. Take heart in knowing that this is normal - but don't let worrying get the best of you. While no one can avoid the negative feelings completely, a simple change in the way you think and feel about catheterisation, can lead to huge emotional benefits.

The power of positivity

Adjusting to life with catheterisation can be challenging and the changes you are experiencing are not just physical, but emotional as well. Maintaining a positive attitude is probably the last thing on your mind. After all, how are you supposed to focus on positivity when so many things seem to be going wrong?

But shifting to a positive mindset and developing a more positive attitude might help you improve your overall mental health. Seeing the

bright side of a situation will help you cope with any potential setbacks, rather than succumbing to feelings of sadness, worry and anxiety,

Tips and strategies

Here are a few simple yet powerful ideas on how you can get started.

- **Take back control of your attitude:** Even if you can't change the circumstances of your life, you can change your attitude. Every time a negative thought crawls into your mind, replace it with a positive thought: what are you grateful for? What are some of the good things in your life?
- **Allow yourself mental breaks:** Try not to put pressure on yourself to feel a certain way or expect to feel like yourself again in a particular time frame. Whenever you feel stressed about your new situation, allow yourself to take a step back.



How to get a healthy bladder as a catheter user

As a catheter user, focusing on your bladder health can really make a difference for your well-being. When your bladder is healthy, there is less risk of urinary tract infections, discomfort and pain.

To help you on your way to a better bladder health, we are giving you our top 10 tips for maintaining a healthy bladder, so you can improve your overall health and happiness.

In general, it is about good hygiene, drinking enough fluids and emptying your bladder regularly. The key is not to have too much urine in your bladder to avoid overstretching your bladder and bacteria growth.

The advice is based on extensive professional knowledge of the bladder and urinary tract, combined with years of practical experience with personal counselling of Coloplast Care consumers in order to enhance bladder health. The advice here

is relevant to anyone who empties their bladder using intermittent catheters.

However, all situations are individual, and if you need personalised advice regarding your situation, please feel free to contact us on [\[insert Care contact number\]](#) on [\[insert opening days + hours\]](#). Our telephone support is supplemental to the counselling you receive at the hospital and at your own doctor's office. If you experience acute discomfort, we recommend that you contact your own doctor/urology department at the hospital you are affiliated with.



- **Make sure you stick to your routine:** Although it might feel overwhelming, it is important to maintain a solid routine. When you stick to a daily routine, the 'when', 'where' and 'how' of your catheterisation becomes less worrying and you gain the freedom to get on with activities that are important to you.
 - **Take control over your situation:** Take an active part in every decision concerning your catheterisation, from choosing your products to setting the boundaries for what you are and aren't ready for. This will lead to a greater sense of control – and make you feel stronger.
 - **Celebrate small victories:** The more you focus on your "wins," the better you'll feel. It's easy to get frustrated and focus on what you can't do when dealing with a chronic illness. Instead of ruminating on these things, try flipping the script and think about all the things you've already done. There's no victory that's too small to celebrate.
 - **Do something nice for yourself every day:** Make sure you're taking time for self-care every day. It can be as simple as spending five minutes sitting outside in the sunshine, writing in your journal, or reading a book. The most important thing is that you're doing something that makes you feel good.
- You are (or will become) what you think you are Practice makes perfect. It's not as hard as it may seem and you if still feel overwhelmed, just try one tip at a time. If you are persistent and keep on working on yourself, your mind will eventually reject its negative thoughts and welcome the positive ones. ●

Habits throughout your day

01



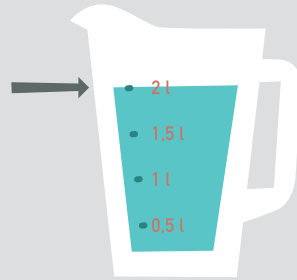
Have a plan in place

The most important thing to achieve a healthy bladder is a good plan - and the motivation to stick to it. Your plan should help you to drink 1½-2 litres of fluids every day and empty the bladder (catheterise) every 3-4 hours.

Why?

We want to ensure that your bladder is emptied and does not serve as a breeding ground for bacteria that can lead to urinary tract infections. To get into a routine, some users put up a schedule on the fridge or set daily alarms on their mobile phones to remind them of their daily urination schedules. Find a plan and system that works for you and your daily routines and if you need help, please call us on [insert Care contact number], on [insert opening days + hours].

02



Drink 1½-2 litres every day

We recommend that you drink 1½-2 litres of fluids per day. Water is always the best choice of fluid for the bladder, as coffee, tea, alcohol, fizzy drinks and other beverages with sugar or sweetener can irritate the bladder, so consume limited amounts of these.

Why?

When you drink 1½-2 litres of fluids, a healthy bladder is maintained, as your urine becomes diluted and any bacteria are flushed out of your bladder.

03



Limit your fluid intake close to bedtime

Are you sleeping like a baby or are you waking up at night to empty your bladder? If the latter is the case, limiting your fluid intake close to your bedtime is a good first step in reducing nocturia.

Why?

Consuming fluids in the evening increases the likelihood of you waking up at night and having to empty your bladder. Also, if you drank a lot during the evening and cannot feel when you need to urinate, you should empty your bladder during the night so that there is not too much urine in your bladder for too long.

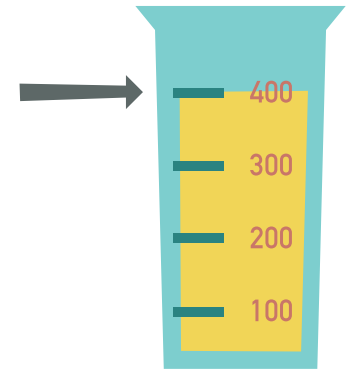
04

Max 400-500mL per urination

As a rule of thumb, there should not be more than 400-500mL of urine per urination. Make sure your bladder is not overfull. If you are in any doubt about how many millilitres of urine you pass per catheterisation, it may be a good idea to measure the amount in a measuring cup and note it down in a your bladder diary once in a while.

Why?

If you often suppress the need to urinate and your bladder contains big amounts of urine, the bladder becomes enlarged (also known as an under-active bladder) and loses its elasticity. When a bladder becomes overstretched, it will lose ability to contract and let out the urine efficiently. The muscles that contract when urine leaves the bladder become overstretched and flaccid when the bladder is overstretched too much and too often, which results in the bladder losing the ability to contract, thus losing the ability to ensure that the urine flows out.



05

Empty your bladder every 3-4 hours

Getting into a good routine, where you always empty your bladder every 3-4 hours throughout the day, is essential to a healthy bladder. Try not to skip any planned catheterisations to maintain your routine.

Why?

It is important to empty your bladder regularly so that urine does not remain in the bladder for too long. Old urine in the bladder serve as a breeding ground for bacteria that can lead to urinary tract infections

3-4 hours



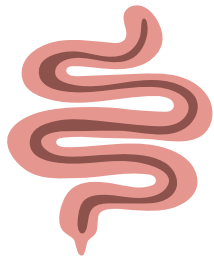
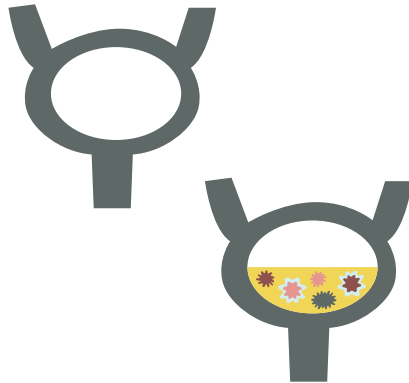
06

Empty your bladder completely

Knowing whether you've let out every drop of urine is impossible, but it's important to empty the bladder as much as possible. We therefore recommend removing the catheter slowly and carefully once your bladder is emptied, so you remove the urine that may be left over at the bottom of the bladder.

Why?

When the bladder is completely emptied regularly, the urine does not stay in the bladder for such a long time. Every time you catheterise, you remove the urine from your bladder and thus (bacteria) waste from your body, which helps you avoid urinary tract infections.



07

Take care of your gut

We've all heard the phrase: you are what you eat. But good gut health is also important to maintain a healthy bladder. We therefore recommend following the [insert local authority] advice on at least [insert amount] of physical activity per day, combined with a high-fibre and low-fat diet according to [insert local authority] dietary recommendations. If you tend to have a hard stomach, you can also check with your doctor to see if you need any medication that will help.

Why?

If you are constipated, or have a hard stomach, it can affect your ability to empty your bladder completely, as your overfilled bowel may put strain on your bladder. Therefore, it is extra important to focus on having a good bowel function.

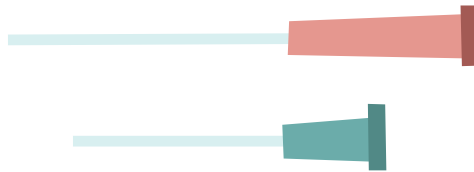
08

Find the right catheter

Finding the right catheter can make all the difference in the world. When you're comfortable with your catheters, the likelihood of you building a good routine and thriving in your new situation is higher.

Why?

When something feels uncomfortable, we tend to ignore it. The same goes for catheterisation and it's therefore essential that you find a catheter or a catheter type that suits your personal preference and lifestyle. But don't stress – sometimes it takes a little trial and error before you figure out what works best for you.



Focus on your hygiene

09

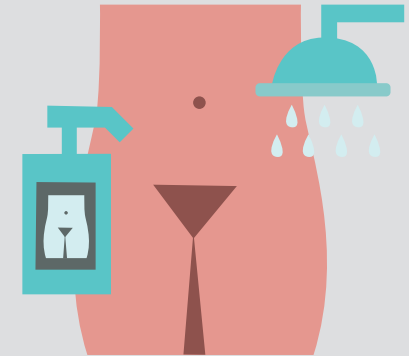
Maintain good intimate hygiene

Maintaining good intimate hygiene should be a priority in everyone's regimen. We recommend one daily wash with water in the area around the urethra. If you leak between urinating, we recommend washing before each catheterisation. As a general rule, washing only with water is sufficient and, if you use soap, it should be intimate soap with a low pH value.

When washing and visiting the toilet, it is important to dry/wash front to back in one wipe, to prevent bacteria from being introduced into the urethra.

Why?

Not all bacteria are bad! You can have both good and bad bacteria around the urethra. To keep proper hygiene, it's important to only use intimate soap and water. By doing so, you can protect the good bacteria and remove unhealthy ones. If you use normal soap or alcohol, you may risk destroying the good bacteria.



10

Ensure good hand hygiene

Proper handwashing is one of the best ways to protect yourself against unwanted bacteria. Make sure you always clean your hands thoroughly by either washing your hands with soap or using hand sanitiser before and after each catheterisation. Even if you have washed your hands thoroughly, make sure to not touch the part of the catheter you insert into the urethra.

Why?

If you don't wash your hands, you risk transferring bacteria from your skin into your urethra, which can cause infections. If you cannot insert a catheter without touching the sterile part, you should consider a catheter that is easier to guide, for example, one that has a protective film or as a last solution use sterile disposable gloves.



Coloplast® Care

When needed. Anywhere. Any time.

– Personalised support for you.

Coloplast Care is a free patient support program that provides reliable information and personalised advice, so that catheter users can better manage their own care and achieve a higher quality of life.



Website and emails

A dedicated website and regular emails with articles and reliable advice



My Continence Check

Keep track of your bladder health regularly through our self-assessment tool



Phone support

Advisers are ready to answer your questions & provide personalised support by phone



Product guidance

Access to information about correct use and product samples on request