

Cleaning Intermittent Urinary Catheters Information Sheet

Note: This is intended to provide IPC guidance on the cleaning of intermittent urinary catheters in Home Living and Supportive Living. **This information does not apply to Acute Care or Long-term Care.**

If you have questions or comments regarding this Information Sheet contact Infection Prevention & Control at infectionpreventioncontrol@ahs.ca.

Cleaning intermittent urinary catheters: home living & supportive living

Purpose

This resource is intended to provide general instruction to clients and healthcare providers for the cleaning of intermittent urinary catheters in continuing care home living and supportive living. It does not provide client specific information or replace prescriber's orders. The exception to the *Standards for Single-Use Medical Devices: As Applied to Critical and Semi-Critical Medical Devices* is for intermittent urinary catheters only and applies to re-use by the same client; it is not intended for re-use between clients.

Key points

- Wash the catheter immediately after use.
- Use a clean, dry catheter for each catheterization. If the catheter remains wet at the time of next use, re-wash and thoroughly rinse it before using.
- Inspect catheter for signs of wear including discolouration, or damage such as cracks or holes.
- Discard catheter after 24 hours from the first use, or sooner if catheter becomes discoloured, no longer drains, or if there are changes in texture (hard, brittle, or soft).

Cleaning intermittent urinary catheters

Before starting, ensure there are extra supplies and equipment to allow for drying time of the catheter.

1. Clean and disinfect the work area, e.g., counter, using a [Health Canada approved disinfectant](#).
2. Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub.
3. Collect the required equipment and supplies:
 - clear liquid soap, e.g., general use dish soap, unscented if available;
 - clean 60 mL catheter tip syringe or squeeze bottle;
 - clean container and measuring cup;
 - clean or disposable towel for the workspace;
 - clean or disposable towel for drying the catheter; and
 - clean, non-sterile gloves.
4. Put on the clean, non-sterile gloves.
5. Add approximately one cup of clean, warm (not hot) tap water into the container or measuring cup and add a few (2-3) drops of liquid soap.
6. Place the catheter in soapy water and clean the external/outside surfaces.
7. Use the catheter tip syringe or squeeze bottle to push soapy water through the catheter tubing.
8. Rinse the catheter inside and out with tap water until the water runs clear through the catheter.
9. Place the catheter between layers of the clean or disposable towel and allow to air dry. When thoroughly dry, store in a clean washable container with a lid, or a new disposable sealable plastic bag or paper bag.

Cleaning Intermittent Urinary Catheters Information Sheet | 2

10. Wash the syringe or squeeze bottle and container with hot soapy water after each use.
11. Rinse with tap water and allow to dry on a clean, dry surface.
Note: Discard syringe or squeeze bottle if damaged, discoloured, or if there are changes in texture, e.g., material becomes hard and brittle or softens.
12. Remove and discard gloves, wash hands with soap and water.
13. Document according to established process if required.

Additional resources

- Refer to [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](https://myhealth.alberta.ca) for consumer health and wellness resources.
- [Intermittent Urinary Catheter Management - Clinical Care Topics](#)
- Learn About How to Use a Straight Catheter for Self-Catheterization:
 - [Female Care Instructions](#)
 - [Male Care Instructions](#)

References

1. Alberta Health Services Clinical Care Topic (2019, June). Urinary Catheter Management: *Self-Catheterization in the Community*. Retrieved from: <https://extranet.ahsnet.ca/teams/policydocuments/1/klink/et-klink-ckv-self-catheterization-in-the-community.pdf>
2. Government of Western Australia, Department of Health. (n.d.). *Caring for your self-intermittent catheter*. Retrieved from HealthyWA: http://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Caring-for-your-catheter
3. Healthwise Staff. (2020, August 4). *Intermittent Catheterization for Men*. Retrieved from MyHealth.Alberta.ca: <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/health/pages/conditions.aspx?Hwid=ug2976>
4. Healthwise Staff. (2020, August 4). *Intermittent Catheterization for Women*. Retrieved from MyHealth.Alberta.ca: <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/health/pages/conditions.aspx?Hwid=ug2979>
5. Nurses Specialized in Wound, Ostomy and Continence Canada, Canadian Nurse Continence Advisors, Urology Nurses of Canada and Infection Prevention and Control Canada (April 2020). *Clean Intermittent Urethral Catheterization in Adults: Canadian Best Practice Recommendations for Nurses*. Retrieved from: <https://ipac-canada.org/photos/custom/Members/pdf/Clean-Intermittent-Urethral-Catheterization-Adults-for-Nurses-BPR-May2020.pdf>
6. Wilks, S.A., Morris, N.S., Thompson, R., Prieto, J.A., Macaulay, M., Moore, K.N., Keevil, W.C & Fader, M. An effective evidence-based cleaning method for the safe reuse of intermittent urinary catheters: In vitro testing, *Neurology and Urodynamics*,39 (2020): 907-915. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nau.24296>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-Share Alike 4.0 International license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/). The licence does not apply to AHS trademarks, logos or content for which Alberta Health Services is not the copyright owner.

Disclaimer: This material is intended for general information only and is provided on an "as is", "where is" basis. Although reasonable efforts were made to confirm the accuracy of the information, Alberta Health Services does not make any representation or warranty, express, implied or statutory, as to the accuracy, reliability, completeness, applicability or