

## Intermittent catheters

Intermittent catheters are also sold in packs with additional items/features to assist with the IC process. By searching the internet you will find that there are many manufacturers selling products that offer a variety of different features. It may be possible to request free samples and to try out some of these different features and you may find that they are suitable for you. Depending on where in the world you live, you may be able to have these products funded or you may have to buy them yourselves.

## Coated catheter sets

- Some catheters have a hydrophilic coating which when activated by applying water, makes the catheter very slippery and easier to insert.
- When you are at home dipping these catheters into water to activate the coating is fairly easy. However, in certain circumstances (e.g. in a public toilet cubicle with no access to running water) this may be more difficult.
- To overcome this problem some catheters come with separate or integrated pouches or syringes of water that enable you to activate the integral water to allow the catheter to be moistened before use.
- A disadvantage is that these kits are slightly more bulky to carry around in your pocket or bag than a single catheter.
- Coated catheters can be slippery to hold, look out for varieties with a place to hold that isn't slippery. Coated catheters are a popular choice in the UK and Europe but are less commonly used around the rest of the world.

## Pre-lubricated catheter sets

- Pre-lubricated catheters are supplied pre-coated with a lubricated gel. This can make using a catheter when out of the home easier. If you have problems with hand control you might find it easier than applying gel separately.

## Collection bags

- Some intermittent catheters come with integrated collection bags so that urine can be collected in a bag rather than passed directly into the toilet.
- This may be handy if you cannot reach the toilet, or if you need to collect and measure your urine.
- They are also available with longer tubing and non-return valves so that urine won't flow back if you are sitting down.
- Some intermittent catheters have packaging that is designed to be used as an extension to enable you to reach the toilet e.g. from a sitting down position if you are in a wheelchair.

## Compact catheters

- Discreet or compact catheters are designed to fold away so that they fit more easily in your pocket or bag and also don't look like catheters.
- Many compact catheters are only available in female versions (as these are a shorter length) but male versions are available (it is the packaging rather than the catheter that is compact, as due to the urethral length men will always need a longer catheter length).
- For added discreetness some of the female versions are designed to resemble lipstick or mascara.
- Users also use spectacle cases or other items to create their own compact or discreet versions of catheters . If you have found a system that works for you please feel free to add it as a top tip on the intermittent catheter page.

## Sterile packs

If you are in a situation where you might need to catheterise using a sterile procedure (e.g. a stay in hospital) you can buy kits that come ready prepared with sterile, gloves, under pad and wipes.

## Antibacterial coated catheters

There are varieties of intermittent catheter available that come with an antibacterial coating, these are not widely available as yet and there is little good research evidence at present to suggest that they are better than standard catheters. More research is needed in this area. They are also available with a combined hydrophilic antibacterial coating.

### Introducer tips

Some catheters are available with an introducer tip that is inserted into the first part of the urethra and the catheter is passed through it into the rest of the urethra and bladder. The idea is to bypass the first part of the urethra that may contain bacteria, however there is currently little research to show if they are effective in reducing urinary tract infections.

### Different shaped tips and connection ends

- Catheters are available with many different shaped tips often with a variety of French names. An example is the coude tip (French for elbow), this may be easier for men to use who have an enlarged prostate, however because of the risk of damaging the urethra or creating a false passage, it is only recommended to try different tips after consultation with a health professional with specialist knowledge in this area.
- Catheters are also available with tapered tips that you may find easier to insert.
- The other end of the catheter is available with two different shapes they are commonly funnel shaped which are suitable for connection to a range of drainage bags if necessary but may also be available with a Luer lok/lock ending to fix it to a drainage bag with a Luer connector.