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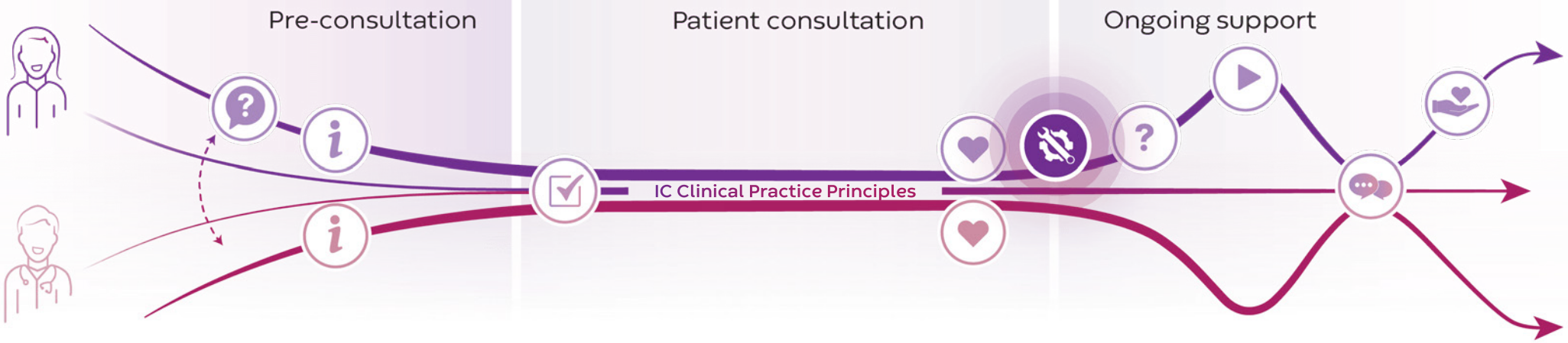
Guiding the way to confident living
with intermittent catheterisation

Your Introduction to Intermittent Catheterisation



Starting out towards confident catheterisation

We know it can be difficult to find out you need to start using an intermittent catheter.

This introduction is here to help guide you and give more information about intermittent catheterisation as you start your journey.

Using a catheter is a life change but it doesn't have to change the way you live

When deciding how intermittent catheterisation will work for you, it might help to keep in mind the things in your life most important to you.

Your health and wellbeing are very important in your decisions, but so are things like your independence, personal relationships (including intimate ones), hobbies, and perhaps even that dream holiday you've always wanted to take.

Intermittent catheterisation should not get in the way of any of these things. It will become easier with practice and can support your lifestyle and help you live the life you want to lead.

Ready? Let's begin together

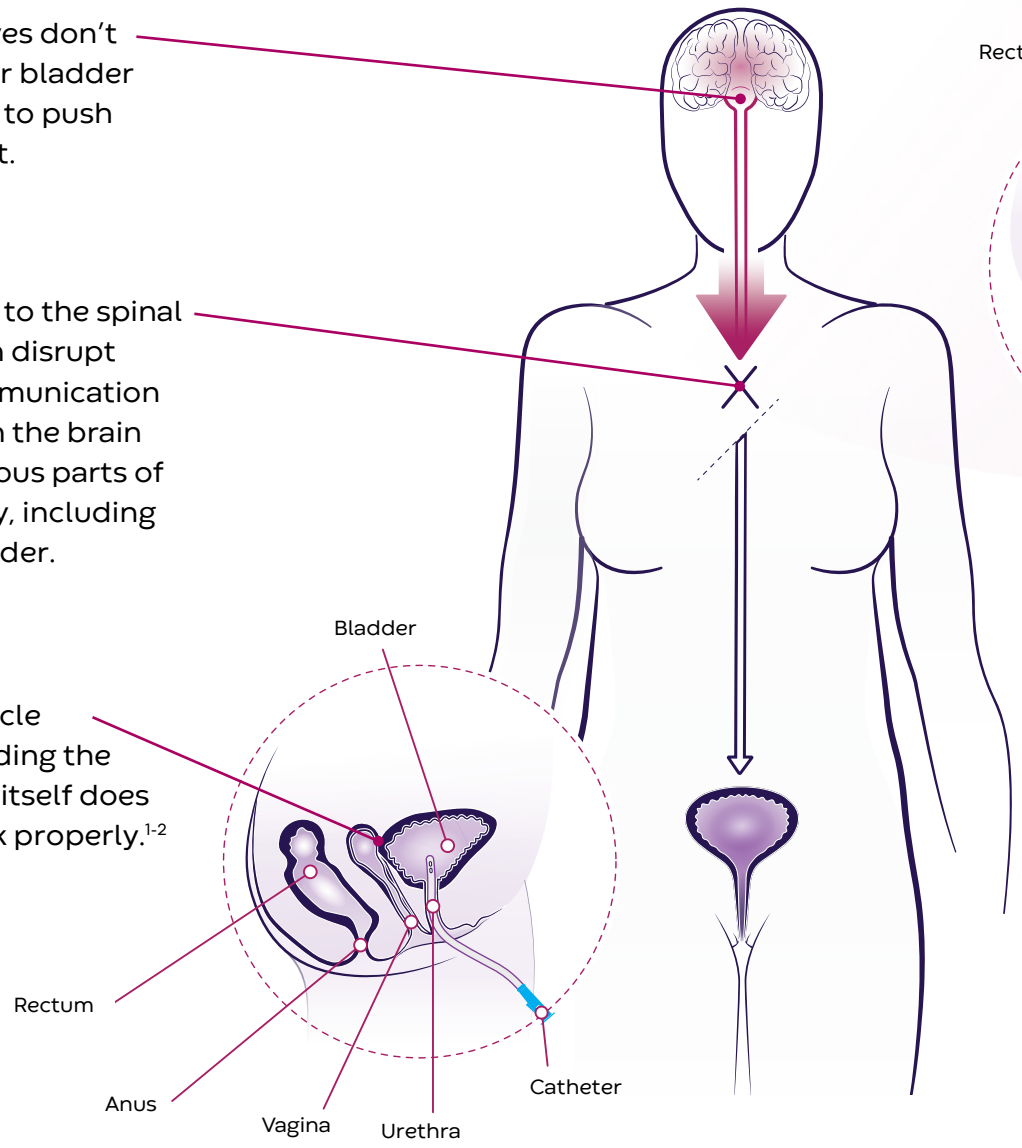
Why might you need to use an intermittent catheter?

People sometimes have difficulty passing urine freely, here are a few reasons why some experience problems.[1-4]

The nerves don't signal for bladder muscles to push urine out.

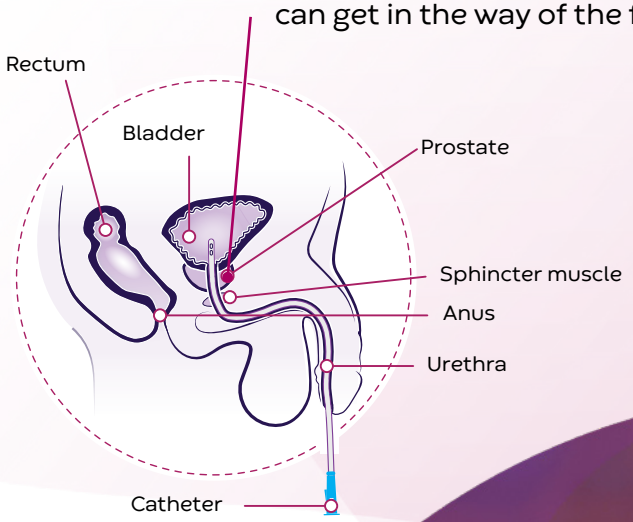
Damage to the spinal cord can disrupt the communication between the brain and various parts of the body, including the bladder.

The muscle surrounding the bladder itself does not work properly.[1-2]



There maybe something blocking the urine.

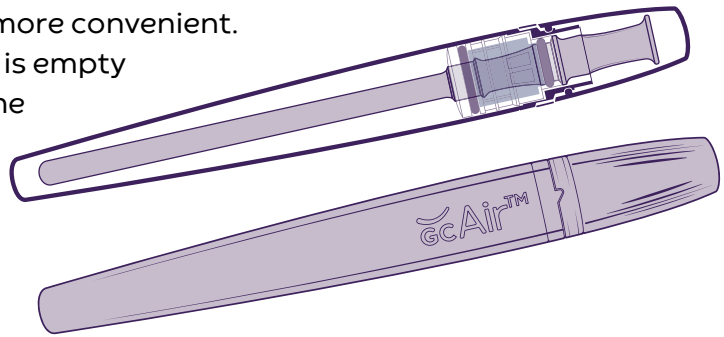
- The sphincter muscle may not open to release urine[1-2]
- An enlarged prostate in some men can get in the way of the free-flow[1]



How catheterisation works.
Helping to drain urine from your bladder

In intermittent catheterisation, you put a catheter - a hollow tube - into the urethra (which is where urine travels from the bladder to leave the body).

Urine drains into a toilet basin or into a collection bag, if more convenient. Once the bladder is empty you can remove the catheter.[3]



Why is keeping a full bladder for too long a health concern?

Your bladder needs emptying 4 to 6 times a day.[3]

Other than the discomfort it can cause, urine accumulating in your bladder can

- damage the wall of your bladder[2]
- allow sediment in urine to build up and form bladder stones[5-7]
- increase your risk of urinary tract infections (UTIs)[2]
- lead to uncontrolled urine leakages[2]

Why might intermittent catheterisation be for you?

If difficulty emptying the bladder has become a health concern, intermittent catheterisation is considered the 'gold-standard' treatment option.[8,9]

Unlike with other catheterisation options, such as indwelling catheters, the catheter doesn't need to be attached to you all day and night; instead, you use the catheter only when you need to urinate (that's why it's called "intermittent" catheterisation).

Regularly emptying your bladder throughout the day with intermittent catheterisation can help you stay in control of your bladder health and minimise the impact on your life.

What is indwelling catheterisation?

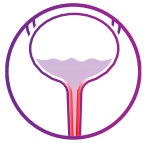
With indwelling catheters (sometimes called a 'Foley') a healthcare professional inserts the catheter through your urethra into your bladder. A small balloon holds it in place inside the bladder, where it is kept for as long as 1 to 3 months.[10]

Compared with indwelling catheterisation, intermittent catheterisation can[2,11]

- reduce your risk of UTIs
- help protect your bladder
- improve your independence and quality of life by letting you move freely between catheterisations
- reduce barriers to intimacy that other catheterisation methods might pose (because you don't need this type of catheter in all the time)

Before deciding if intermittent catheterisation is for you

As with any medical intervention, it's important to understand potential risks. The good news is that the risks can be reduced with good training, good technique, and by finding a catheter that works for you.



UTIs

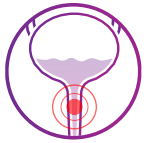
Although the risk of infections is generally lower than with indwelling catheters,[1] UTIs can still happen if bacteria is able to pass up your urethra and into your bladder.[12]

Urethral damage

Repeated irritation (often caused by a catheter not being well lubricated or if more training for good technique is needed) can cause scar tissue to build up and make the urethra narrower. You might hear this called 'urethral strictures'.[2,13]

Bladder stones

This can happen if sediment in your bladder is insufficiently drained and allowed to build up over time or in some cases, when a pubic hair is pushed into your bladder.[1,5-7]



Urethral irritation

Using a catheter can irritate the urethral lining, which is a more common occurrence when people are first learning how to use a catheter.[2,13]

False passage

It is possible that the lining of the urethra gets punctured during catheterisation, often due to the excessive use of force. If someone gets a 'false passage', they'll need to use an indwelling catheter for several weeks while the urethra lining heals.[1]

There's no need to worry about the specific details for now

If you choose to do intermittent catheterisation, your healthcare professional will talk you through step-by-step instructions, which might vary depending on which catheter you choose.

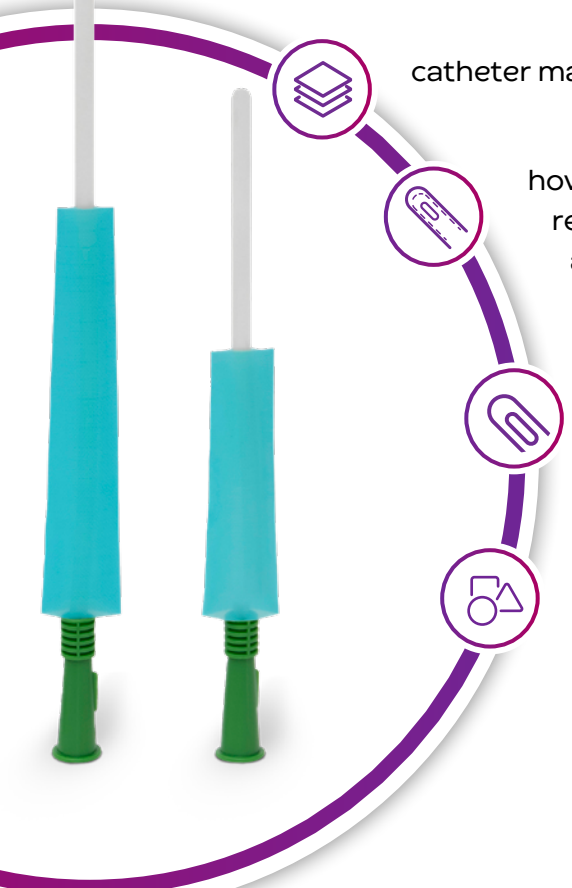
Selecting a catheter for your lifestyle

Catheters come in different shapes, sizes, and styles to suit different people.[1,3,14]

Because the urethra is a barrier against germs that can cause infections, **it's important to make sure your catheter is well lubricated to avoid discomfort or irritation.**[2]

Not all catheters are the same

Catheters differ in



- catheter material
- how they're lubricated (some are ready to go, others you need to apply gel yourself)
- different shaped tips to help you find what's most comfortable for you[1,3,14]
- different accessories and styles to help with convenience or discretion if you're on-the-go[1,3,14]

Get support

It's important to talk with your healthcare provider about how you're feeling and openly discuss any concerns.

Convatec me+ Continence Care support is here for you. The programme consists of ' Your Personalised Video Guide', educational tools and resources and 10 specially created emotional wellbeing modules to guide and support you on your catheterisation journey.

Helpful resources

Find out more about intermittent catheterisation (sometimes called IC) including essential knowledge of anatomy and IC at convatec.com.

- **Intermittent catheters:** what they are and how to know which one is right for you
- **The IC technique:** what it is, how it is learned, and how important each step is
- **Living with IC:** complications to watch out for and how to prevent them
- **A confident journey:** useful advice and tips, from us and from IC users, and common questions answered

Notes

Scan for additional resources and access to Convatec me+ Continence Care support or visit www.convatec.com/xxxxxx

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