

Catheterizing In School

Everyone needs to empty their bladder during the day. Sometimes, sickness or an accident can prevent the body's waste system from working right. Intermittent catheterization uses a catheter (tube) to help the body get rid of pee throughout the day and keep bacteria from growing.

The tube goes through the urethra and into the bladder. This allows pee to drain through the tube and empty the child's bladder. Once emptied, the tube is taken out and thrown away.

The child can usually do this without help, but it is important that you are informed and are near-by to offer support.

Be Attentive

Some children might not be able to feel when their bladder is full or getting full. Either make a habit of individually reminding the child at regular times throughout the day or create a timed schedule for catheterizing.

Watch for signs of urinary tract infections:

- Fever
- Stomach or back pains
- General discomfort

Provide Accommodations

Make sure the child has access to a separate toilet in a restroom that they can lock. It can be hard enough to empty their catheter with other kids in the same bathroom. Ideally, the restroom should also contain a lockable area where the child can store extra catheters and any other needed supplies.

Be Discreet

The child should decide who needs to know about their catheterization or the reason they must use one. Hidden handicaps are sensitive subjects, especially for young people.

Act Normally

Treat the child the same as you do the other kids. They have the right to a normal life and using a catheter doesn't stop them from going on outings, school trips, or taking part in other adventures. It is a good idea to bring some extra catheters along on trips and make sure the child is given time and an opportunity to use them. Talk with the child and their caregivers about the trip so you are clear on what you'll need to do.

What are my responsibilities?

In most cases, the child can do the catheterization by themselves, and the school nurse is ready to help if there are any problems. Your main role is a supporting one. If you need to offer more hands-on support, you should get training from a health care professional. There are a few important rules of thumb you do need to remember:

IN CARE OF KIDS

- Hygiene is very important. You'll need to have anti-bacterial soap in your clinic as well as baby wipes to wipe the area clean before catheterization.
- Supplies to have available in clinic:
 - Baby wipes
 - Lubricant
 - Anti-bacterial soap
 - Extra catheters
- It is important to have different sizes of catheters available in case there is a problem. When this happens, you should use a size smaller catheter (especially with a mitrofanoff stoma). For example, if the child uses a 12 Fr. catheter, you should have several 10 Fr. catheters on hand to use if the 12 Fr. catheter won't go into the stoma for some reason.

For questions or concerns, please call the Urology department at 720-777-2705 M-F 7am-5:30pm. For after hours, please call the Urology resident on call through the Children's Hospital Colorado operator at 720-777-1234.

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