



Socializing

Bladder problems should never hold you back from going out and enjoying life. For some people, however, this is easier said than done. Outside your home, you may not always know exactly what washroom facilities will be available and what products you will need.

Planning is key

Once you have a catheterization routine in place, you can plan your visits to the toilet, so they fit in with whatever you are doing. If you have scheduled some back-to-back activities you just need to consider when you need to catheterize between events. Ask yourself: do I need to catheterize before leaving the restaurant? Or, am I better off catheterizing just before the movie starts so I don't need to leave during an exciting scene?

Packing supplies for going out

Some intermittent catheters come in compact versions that can easily fit into your pocket or handbag. You can even fit a handful of them if you don't know when your night out will end. If you choose one with a discreet and non-medical design, no one will know what it is! Remember to be prepared for all types of washrooms- the good, the bad, and the ugly. Public washrooms may not be as sanitary as home, so bring antiseptic wipes and hand sanitizing gels. You may also maybe consider a catheter-and-bag solution.

Should you tell your friends?

Having a trusted friend or family member who is aware of your issues and your catheterization routine would allow them to support you when you go out together by acknowledging your need for scheduled breaks and help you if you need anything. It's not necessary to provide others with a lot of detail. Simply saying that you have a bladder issue and need to plan your washroom breaks is a sufficient explanation for most people. Remember, lots of people have bladder issues even if they do not catheterize!

Did you know?

You can find more helpful tips and resources
on the Coloplast Care website!

bladder.coloplastcare.ca

Enjoying experiences with others is important

Participating in activities where you have less control over the situation might challenge your feeling of security and privacy. You might worry because most people don't know about your issue or because you don't want them to know. Learn how you can socialise with fewer worries.

While it is possible to enjoy cultural events from your couch, it doesn't compare to attending a concert and enjoying the lively atmosphere. It also isn't the same as going to a live hockey game and cheering with an arena full of fans.

Thanks to technology, you can even meet friends virtually in the comfort of your home. However, if you really want a good talk (or want to share the latest gossip), why not do it over a meal at your favorite restaurant?

Be creative and surprise your friends or family when it comes to socializing. This way, you get to pick a social situation that is the most convenient for you. But you should also be able to be flexible without worrying.

IC can make socializing easier

With intermittent catheterization (IC) you can plan your day, and ensure that your bladder is emptied when you want to empty it. With some practice, it can be done quickly and you won't be away for any longer than anyone else using the washroom and most people don't need to know anything about your catheterization routine if you don't want them to.

What if I'm at a friend's house?

At friend's house you might worry about privacy when using the washroom. Bring some plastic bags with you to wrap the catheter in after use so you can discard it or take it home with you. You can also get catheters that are compact and discreet, so you can just have them

in your pocket – even after they have been used.

Talking about your routine might make life easier for you

We all have our own personal preferences when it comes to sharing private details about our



lives. However, it can be helpful to share some of your problems with others instead of keeping everything to yourself.

If you're a very private person, you may not want to share things about your catheterization routine with anyone except your spouse or partner. But it might be a relief for you to be open about it to other family members and friends too. If they know about your need to schedule washroom breaks they will likely be more understanding, supportive and helpful when you're together.

Identify a buddy to back you up

If you are concerned about going out, you might consider telling someone who will be with you about your situation. Then you can feel confident that this person can back you up if you need the driver to make an extra stop on the road or to get things for you that you urgently need.

How much detail do I need to give?

It is not always necessary to explain all the physical details to someone you are not very close to. It is enough to say that you have a condition where you need frequent or planned washroom visits or whatever your own situation requires. Maybe you also want to let them know about the bag of extra supplies you have packed for additional safety (not its content), so they know what it looks like in case you urgently need it.



Tips for being out an about

Enjoy your activities with confidence by planning ahead.

Plan your activity

It may be tempting to skip catheterization when you aren't at home or if you are with people that don't know about your condition. You should remember that skipping catheterization might result in leaks and can also be harmful to your bladder in the long term.

Plan your activities ahead of time instead so you can enjoy them without interruption. Set aside time for catheterization during the activities. Catheterize as close to the time you leave your home as possible and find out where the nearest washrooms are located in advance.

Set a reminder if necessary

It's easy to lose track of time! Simply setting an alarm on your phone or watch may help put your mind at ease if you are concerned about remembering when to catheterize.

Pack smart with a "smart kit"

When away from home, it is good to know that you have all of your catheterization supplies with you. Public washrooms are not as clean and might not be equipped in a convenient way. If you worry about leaks, it may

also be important that you can clean yourself or change clothes. Some people use a different type of catheter when they are away from home. You might want to have a more compact catheter, or one with a urine bag attached.

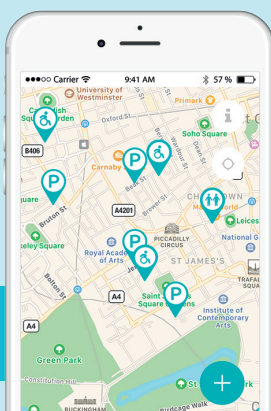
Know what washrooms await you

Check out available washrooms at an event in advance. This may be especially important if you are in a wheelchair. Email or call to learn about how the location or venue you are visiting is equipped.

Consider what to wear

Dark colours may make a small leak less noticeable. Bring a sweatshirt, sweater or cardigan that you can quickly wrap around your waist if necessary. You might also consider using a pad or absorbent to feel safe from leakage until you feel comfortable being out and about.

These are general guidelines meant to help you with typical questions. You should follow the specific instructions provided by your doctor or nurse and catheter you are using.



WheelMate™

The WheelMate app is a simple way to find clean, accessible restrooms and parking spaces on the go.

Visit www.coloplast.ca/wheelmate to learn more.

Download from Apple App Store or Google Play



What if I'm in a public washroom?



If needed, it may help to map out your neighborhood and other places you frequent in order to be able to plan where you can do catheterize comfortably. There are three things that determine whether a place is suitable for catheterizing:

Privacy

Obviously, privacy while you are catheterizing is very important. Find out where there are washrooms that give you the privacy you need.

Plan your day so you can visit the restroom when you need to, according to your routine.

Cleanliness

When catheterizing, there is always a risk of infection, but your own bacteria are rarely the main reason for getting urinary tract infections (UTIs). The risk actually increases when other people, like your nurse or helper, perform your catheterization for you.

Whatever the location or circumstance, always wash your hands immediately before touching the catheter. If you need to touch anything (wheelchair rims, crutches or a door handle) after you've washed your hands, use hand sanitizing gel or an antiseptic wipe before touching the catheter.

If you are prone to developing UTIs, you might be concerned about catheterizing outside your home. Just remember, it is important that you empty your bladder regularly, as urine left in the bladder for long periods of time is one of the main reasons for getting UTIs. So, when you are out and about, even though it may be difficult to find a clean washroom, it is not a good idea to skip catheterization.

Facilities

The layout in a restroom also affects how easy it is to use. How much space you have, where the sink is placed relative to the toilet, or if you're in a wheelchair, the width of the door and whether there is a ramp (and how steep it is).

Many people find it helpful to keep needed supplies in a bag. It's also a good idea to keep extra supplies in the car or at work.

Remember, as a catheter user you should always follow the advice of your doctor or nurse.