



Work

Do you work to live or live to work? No matter which category you fall into, most of us spend a lot of time at our place of work.

When you're at work, you should be able to concentrate on your job and not worry about bladder health. Whether you have been working continuously or are just getting back to work, bladder issues can unfortunately not be left at home. Catheterizing needs to fit in with your workday – but it doesn't have to have a big impact on your work.

This same can be said even if you don't work, but do attend conferences, meetings, seminars and other activities away from home with few and scheduled breaks.

This collection of articles looks at how you can make intermittent catheterization fit into your workday and other tips for work.

These are general guidelines meant to help you with typical questions. You should always consult with your healthcare provider before starting an exercise or physical activity regimen.

Did you know?

You can find more helpful tips and resources
on the Coloplast Care website or by calling the Coloplast Care team!

1-866-293-6349
bladder.coloplastcare.ca

Work – how to manage bladder issues

We hope these tips will help you to concentrate on your job.

Intermittent catheterization can be done within a few minutes, so your washroom visits would normally not be longer than anyone else's. If you are worried about how to cope with bladder issues at work – maybe you just returned from illness or you recently changed jobs – here are some tips that might help you.

Do I need to tell anyone?

Whether or not you need to tell others about your situation depends on how much your condition influences your work. It might be easier for you if your boss knows that you need fixed washroom breaks. If you suddenly need to leave during a prolonged meeting or task, he or she will know why. You are not required to provide further details about your condition. You may also want to tell a trusted colleague for extra support.

Your rights when you return after illness or surgery

The laws of most countries state that employers must make »reasonable adjustments« that you might need in order to enable you to work again. If you are in a wheelchair, it could be an accessible toilet or other necessary equipment. Investigate which people to contact to arrange such adjustments. If you work for a large company such questions are usually part of the duties of a human resource manager.

Meetings

Meetings can be stressful – especially long ones. If you chair them, you can set aside time for short breaks – the other participants will probably appreciate 5 minutes to stretch their legs or grab a coffee. If you are a participant, it may not be

as easy just leave during the meeting. Catheterize just before the meeting and suggest one or more breaks to the chairperson. Again, most people will welcome your suggestion.

Business travels or courses

Even with a good bladder management routine at work you might eventually experience challenges. Many people with bladder issues find it stressful if their work requires business travelling or participating in courses away from the work place. Here is some travel advice:

- Make sure that you pack a little extra of everything (catheters, extra clothes, plastic bags, wipes and sanitising gel) in a bag you have close to you so you are prepared for less hygienic toilets during your stay.
- Plan out your catheterization schedule so that it can work within the travel schedule and breaks.
- Consider a compact catheter or a catheter-and-bag solution. Our Coloplast Care team can advise you on these products. You'll find our contact details on the cover of this issue.

You can perhaps benefit from our advice in our travel issue of the Care program, where you'll find tips for airplane travel, clever packing and more.



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.



IC – how to make it work at work

Pack and plan for a workday.

How to schedule catheterization

You could link your intermittent catheterization schedule to regular events throughout the working day, for example, regular meetings or your coffee and lunch breaks.

Bring enough supplies

Make sure you take enough catheters to work every day. Compact catheters might be a good idea for work, so you don't need to bring a bag to the toilet. We also recommend keeping spare catheters at work or in your car. It's always a good idea to pack some extra supplies - just in case.

Limit coffee or other caffeinated drinks at work

It's common to sip coffee or water all day. It can be beneficial to limit caffeinated beverages, as they will

make you go more often. You should still aim to drink 1.5 liters of fluids per day (unless limited by a medical condition or instructed otherwise by your doctor or nurse), but it might be a good idea to keep track of how much you drink at work so you can time your catheterizations accordingly.

Bring an extra change of clothes

With a good routine in place you will minimize the risk of having accidents either at work or anywhere else. Still, it never hurts to be prepared! Wearing dark clothes will help make an accident less visible to others. It is also a good idea to keep spare clothes at work or in your car.

Keep a glass of water near you... if you have an accident, just act a little clumsy and spill some of the water on your lap... no one will know the difference!

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.

Working on the road and planning

Thomas, a consultant from Denmark, drives more than 40,000 miles a year. Read his personal story about managing his many client meetings despite bladder issues.



Working on the road with many client meetings may seem like a challenging job when you have bladder issues. But, Thomas has found his way.

Today Thomas did something new; he catheterized in a client's washroom. "Luckily it was very clean", says Thomas.

The next meeting takes place in a café in central Copenhagen. After this, a 3.5 hours drive awaits Thomas, taking him back to his wife and children at the other end of Denmark.

It's a long day for Thomas, who works as a recruitment and leadership consultant – especially because he uses an intermittent catheter. These have been a part of his daily routine since an accident in 2001, when he fell on a metal staircase and landed on his back.

"I always avoid public toilets where I don't know the hygienic state, because I get urinary tract infections easily – I've seen my share of gas station washrooms!

But yesterday I went for a long bike ride, so I drank more water than usual."

Normally Thomas would limit his fluid intake before taking a trip to the other end of the country. He always catheterizes at home in the morning and considers how much and when he drinks during the day. In this way he's able to control when he needs to catheterize.

His bowel issues are another story: Thomas needs 4 fixed 15 minutes breaks during the day to manage it.

Thomas is on the road with success despite these issues. His own explanation is this:

"I avoid leaks and infections because I know my body very well, and I know what works for me and what doesn't. And with good products, professional help and planning, you can achieve more than you think."