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# Sex, Dating, and Intimacy for Catheter Users



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# 1 Introduction\_

Navigating a romantic relationship and maintaining an active sex life may feel daunting whether you're new to using intermittent catheters or have been using them for some time. You may worry that intermittent catheterization may interfere with your intimacy or dating life.

Although this concern is natural, it is important to remember that using intermittent catheters does not prevent you from experiencing fulfilling intimacy and a dynamic dating life.<sup>1</sup>

This resource aims to provide you with some tips to help you enjoy a close connection, a healthy sex life and dating while being an intermittent catheter user.



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## 2 Tips for Sex and Intimacy as a Catheter User

Here are some tips that can help you enjoy a rich intimate life with intermittent catheterization:

### Tip 1 Understand your needs

Explore your care needs and what you need from your partner when it comes to intimacy.<sup>2</sup> Discuss these needs with your partner and help them understand what they need to do to support you.

### Tip 2 Talk to your partner

Have an open, honest conversation with your partner about your intermittent catheterization and how it integrates with your intimate life.<sup>2</sup> This conversation allows both of you to share concerns, needs, and ways to support each other in nurturing a closer bond.



## Tip 3

### Plan ahead

When it comes to sex and being intimate with your partner as an intermittent catheter user, avoiding urinary tract infections (UTIs) can be a priority. Here's what you can do:

- **Before sex:** Ensure your bladder is empty to reduce the risk of infections.<sup>3</sup> Also, clean your genital area from front to back and wash your hands before and after catheter use.<sup>4</sup>
- **During sex:** Keep water-soluble lubricant at hand to minimize friction and the risk of UTIs.<sup>3</sup> Also, consult with your healthcare provider on safe birth control options that won't heighten UTI risks, as some options, such as diaphragms and spermicides, can irritate the genital area and increase the risk of UTI.<sup>3</sup>
- **After sex:** Catheterize after sex to flush out any residual urine and bacteria.<sup>3</sup> Drink 2-3 glasses of water and empty your bladder when you feel the need. Also, clean your genital area after sex.<sup>4</sup>

## Tip 4

### Be creative and experiment

Penetration is only one way to have sex. Explore other forms of sexual activity with your partner to discover what brings you both joy.<sup>5</sup> Also, experiment with sex positions, aids like special pillows, sex toys, or different types of lingerie to widen your sexual experience.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, intimacy extends far beyond the physical act of sex.<sup>7</sup> Engage with your partner in deep conversations, shared hobbies, gentle touches, or even silent companionship to strengthen your bond.<sup>7</sup> Discover activities both of you find fulfilling, such as cooking together, learning a new skill, or any other activity as a pair. Embrace emotional and intellectual connections by sharing your feelings, thoughts, and dreams, which can be just as intimate as physical expressions.

Remember, intimacy is about closeness, trust, and understanding each other on multiple levels. Through creativity and experimentation, you can find numerous ways to nurture your connection.

## Tip 5

## Seek support

You are not alone. Many communities and resources, such as Spinal Cord Injury Ontario, are available for those using intermittent catheters. Connect with these communities and talk to people with similar experiences to gain insights, support, and encouragement.<sup>2</sup>

**Coloplast Care** is a free product and lifestyle support program for catheter users. We offer support through free online resources on our website, phone support, and product guidance. Learn more and sign up at [here](#) or call a dedicated **Care Advisor** at **+1-866-293-6349**.

If you experience recurring UTI or other challenges around sex, talk to your healthcare provider. They should be able to provide you with additional strategies and solutions to maintain a healthy intimate life.

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# SpeediCath®



## Tip 6

## Use the right catheter for you

Choosing a catheter that fits your lifestyle may help with your overall confidence and comfort. SpeediCath® compact catheters are designed to be discreet, so your self-catheterization routine doesn't have to get in the way of your intimate life. They are also pre-lubricated and ready to use right out of the packaging! SpeediCath compact catheters are available in both male and female. [Click here](#) to learn more and try a free\*\* sample!

\*\* Limitations apply

SpeediCath® catheters may be prescribed for use by pediatric patients (children to age 21) and adults who require bladder drainage due to chronic urine retention or post void residual volume (PVR). Before use, carefully read all of the instructions. Call your doctor if you think you have a UTI or can't pass the catheter into the bladder. For more information regarding risks, potential complications and product support, call Coloplast Corp. at 1 (866) 293-6349 and/or consult the company website at [www.coloplast.ca](http://www.coloplast.ca).

# 3 Overcoming Barriers to Love and Intimacy

by Brittney

*Brittney received compensation from Coloplast to provide this information.  
Each person's situation is unique so your experience may not be the same.*

When I was paralyzed at the age of 13, my first thought when I woke up in the hospital was, “no one is ever going to love me now”. I was in excruciating pain and had just learned that I would never walk again, but my first fears were not about my pain or how I would live without the use of my legs, my first fears were about rejection and loss of connection.

In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, connection is the third most important, coming just after basic survival (food, water, shelter) and safety. In fact, human connection is so important that it is a proven factor in our life expectancy, EVEN outweighing other risk factors such as a poor diet. Humans with meaningful relationships will outlive those that are isolated.



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When we see the research on connection it makes sense why my first thought after getting paralyzed was about that. My basic needs were being met - I had food, water, and shelter - and I was safe, so the next most important thing was connection.

## **I wanted to know:** *was I still lovable as a person with a disability?*

Many years, a few boyfriends, and a husband later I know that the answer to this question is **YES**. I wish I could say that the journey to find the answer was easy, but it wasn't. My journey was fraught with limiting beliefs, self-doubt and fear. As a newly disabled person I just couldn't **BELIEVE** that someone would love me.



As I reached adulthood, I just couldn't believe that anyone would find me physically desirable. Now it was not just love, but intimacy, that was at stake.

Would anyone ever want to be intimate **with me**?

More importantly, **what would they do when they found out** all the horrible things that I have to do **like use a catheter**?

**Then what?**

I had so much fear around love and intimacy for so many years and I soon realized that I was creating my **OWN** barriers. I was building obstacles so big that I believed no one could climb over them until, slowly, I realized that these barriers just crumbled as soon as I let someone in, shared my scary truths, or just let go of the fear.

I am now married, with two kids and know without a doubt that I am lovable **AND** physically desirable. To get to the place I am now I had to overcome these psychological barriers:

1

### Feeling like a burden/less than equal in my relationship

I realized early on in my journey that feeling this way led to me settling for things in relationships that I shouldn't. When one partner feels they have less value than the other it sets up an unhealthy power dynamic in which it is far too easy to get taken advantage of or even abused. No matter what your physical abilities, **YOU ARE AN EQUAL** partner. Never let anyone treat you as if you aren't.

2

### Believing that no one would accept my bowel and bladder incontinence/management

I was terrified that if I told someone about the fact that I used a catheter they would be repulsed. When I finally got the nerve to tell someone, the reaction was mild curiosity. No repulsion. My biggest advice here is to **NEVER** apologize for the things you have to do to keep yourself alive. Just talk about them as if they're no big deal and most of the time... they're no big deal. **YOU SET THE TONE.**

3

### Believing that I would not be able to satisfy my partner as well as an able-bodied woman

I'm not in the business of interviewing able-bodied women about their sex lives and giving satisfaction surveys to their partners so I realized after many years that I really have no idea how well able-bodied women can satisfy anyone else. Now I spend less energy wondering if someone else might be able to satisfy my partner and more energy **WORKING ON OPEN, HONEST COMMUNICATION** so that I'll know if there is ever a problem in that department.



[Click here](#) to read more about Brittney in her user story!



# 4 Beyond the bedroom: *Intimacy and intermittent catheterization*

Your intermittent catheter is a part of you, just like any other trait. Embrace it. Prioritize self-care to boost your self-esteem and, when ready, communicate openly with your potential partners. Your catheter doesn't define your ability to have an active and exciting dating life.<sup>2</sup>

With open communication, a little planning, creativity, and self-care, you're well on your way to a rewarding intimate and dating life.

Whether you're well-versed in using intermittent catheterization or just starting out, remember that you can create a fulfilling romantic and intimate life with partners who trust and respect your needs.



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# Information and help

## Coloplast Care

You can get help from a Coloplast Care Advisor!  
We are available from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm (EST) at:

**1-866-293-6349**

**[www.coloplastcare.ca](http://www.coloplastcare.ca)**

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