



## Adjusting to work - tips for ISC users

Most of us spend a lot of time in the workplace. No matter what job you do, you should be able to concentrate without worrying about your bladder. Catheterising needs to fit in with your workday as it does at home, and doesn't have to cause disruption - just take regular toilet breaks as you usually would. If your job requires you to attend conferences or meetings away from home, the same consideration applies - schedule your catheterisations around your agenda. In this factsheet, we provide tips on making catheterisations fit seamlessly into your working day.



### How to manage bladder conditions at work

Intermittent self catheterisation (ISC) can be done in minutes, so your toilet visits wouldn't be longer than anyone else's. If you're worried about managing your bladder 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?

This is your choice and depends on how much your condition influences your work. It might be a good idea to tell your boss so they know that you need fixed toilet breaks, especially if you suddenly need to leave during a prolonged meeting or task, they will know why. You don't need to go into detail about your condition.



#### Your rights when returning after illness or surgery

By law, employers are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' that you might need to enable you to work again. If you're in a wheelchair, this could be making working areas and toilet facilities accessible. Investigate who you should contact to arrange such adjustments. In larger companies, this is usually part of the duties of the Human Resources department.



#### Meetings

Meetings can be stressful - especially long ones. If it's your meeting, you can set aside time for breaks, but if

you are a participant yourself, it may not be easy to leave during the meeting. Catheterise just before and suggest some breaks to the chairperson - most people will welcome your suggestion.



#### Business travels or courses:

Many people with bladder issues find it stressful when travelling away from the workplace for meetings or courses. Here are some tips:

- Pack extra supplies (catheters, disposal bags, wipes, hand gel) in a bag so you are prepared for less hygienic toilets during your journey or stay
- Plan your catheterisations around your travel schedule and breaks
- Consider a catheter-and-bag solution. Our Coloplast Charter team can advise you on these products and what options may be suitable for you. Call us on 0800 132 787 for advice.

You may find our factsheet on travel useful, which includes tips for travelling, packing and more. Get in touch with the Coloplast Charter team to request a copy.



## How to manage ISC at work



### How to schedule catheterisation

You could link your intermittent catheterisation 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. To help with discretion, you could try compact catheters, provided they're suitable for your condition. We also recommend keeping spare catheters at work or in your car. However, it's a good idea to pack some extra supplies and accessories just in case.



### Limit coffee or other caffeine drinks at work

Most people sip coffee or water during their work day. It can be beneficial to limit caffeinated beverages, as they will make you go more often.

You should still aim to drink 1.5-2 litres (3-4 pints) 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 catheterisations accordingly.



### Bring an extra change of clothes

With good routines you will minimise the risk of having accidents both at work and anywhere else. Should an accident happen, you could wear dark clothes so it's less visible to others. It is also a good idea to keep a change of clothes at work or in your car.

Keep a glass of water near you... if you unfortunately experience a urine leak, just act a little clumsy and spill some of the water on your lap... this will divert attention to the water spill.

## Working on the road - and planning for it

*Thomas, who works as a consultant, drives more than 40,000 miles a year. Read his personal story about managing his many client meetings despite having bladder issues.*

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

One day, Thomas did something he never dared to before; he catheterised at a client's toilet. "Luckily it was very clean" says Thomas.

This interview is taking place in a café, and Thomas has a 3.5 hour journey behind the wheel afterwards, home to his wife and children.

It's a long day for Thomas, who works as a consultant within recruitment and leadership – especially because he uses an intermittent catheter. These have been a part of his daily routine since his accident in 2001, where 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 petrol station toilets! But yesterday I took a long ride on my racing bike, so I drank more water than usual".

Normally Thomas would limit his fluid intake before taking such a long trip. He always catheterises at home in the morning and considers how much and when he drinks during the day. This way, he's able to control when he needs to catheterise.

His bowel issue is 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. "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."



## More support

If you did not find all the information that you need in this factsheet, you can contact Coloplast Charter on **0800 783 1434** for advice and support. Alternatively, you can visit [www.coloplastcharter.co.uk](http://www.coloplastcharter.co.uk) or discuss your questions and concerns with your healthcare professional.