



Socialising tips for ISC users

Many people with bladder problems worry about access to toilet facilities, and this often holds them back from socialising with friends and family. The key to success is good planning - check what toilet facilities you'll have access to and when, and plan your catheterisations around this. Make sure you have everything you need with you - catheters, sanitising wipes or gel, and disposal bags. Some catheters come in very compact and discreet versions that you can easily slip in your pocket or handbag - and they often don't even look like catheters, so no one needs to know what it is! You may want to tell a trusted friend or family member that you have a bladder condition so they can acknowledge and support your need for scheduled breaks. This factsheet provides tips on how to make the most of your time with loved ones.



Enjoying experiences with others is important

You have less control over your ISC routine when you socialise away from home, but try not to let this hold you back. You can still manage your catheterisations discreetly. Here are some tips:



Watching a football match or concert on a screen just isn't the same as experiencing it live. And while we can video call friends and family from our own home, it doesn't compare to meeting them in person.

Try building up your confidence with social events slowly. Start by choosing environments that are convenient, like a local restaurant with good toilet facilities. As you become more comfortable, go further afield and visit new places.



ISC can make socialising easier

With ISC you can plan your day and empty your bladder at a time that suits you. You'll become quicker at performing ISC and eventually won't take any longer than anyone else going for a toilet break.



If you do want to share...

Even if you're a private person, it might be a relief for you to be open about your condition to wider family members and friends. If they know about your routine, they may be more understanding, supportive and helpful when you're out together. 1 in 3 older men and half of women experience bladder control problems - you're far from alone.



How much should I share?

This is up to you. You can keep it brief and just explain that you have a condition that requires frequent or planned toilet breaks. You could also show your supplies to someone that you're comfortable with confiding in, so they know what your products look like in case of an emergency.



Tips for being out and about

Enjoy any activity you want with confidence by planning ahead. Here are some of our top tips on how to make the most of your time with friends and family.



Plan your activity

It may be tempting to skip catheterisation when you're not at home, travelling, or if you're with people that don't know about your condition. Remember skipping catheterisation could result in leaks and could be harmful to your bladder in the long term.

Instead, plan your activities ahead of time so you can enjoy them without interruptions. Set aside time for catheterising during the activities. Catheterise as close to the time you leave your home as possible, find out where the nearest toilets are located in advance at your destination and plan to use them at convenient times.



Set a reminder if necessary

It's easy to lose track of time when you're out and about, especially when you're having a good time. To help you remember when you need to catheterise, you could set an alarm on your phone or watch, meaning there's one less thing for you to worry about!



Pack smart and think about your destination

When you're away from home, it's important to have the necessary ISC supplies with you. Think about where you will be catheterising at your destination. Public toilets aren't as clean and might not be equipped with what you need - in this case, take supplies that help you stay hygienic. If you worry about leaks, take supplies to help you clean up, or even a change clothes. Some people find using a different catheter works well when they're away from home - the Coloplast Charter team can advise what catheters would be suitable for you.



Check toilet facilities in advance

Research or call your destination to find out how it's equipped so you can prepare accordingly.



Plan your outfit

Dark colours tend to make leaks less noticeable. Have a blazer, jumper or cardigan on hand that you can wrap around your waist if necessary. You might want to consider wearing a pad to feel more secure during your first few outings.

Public toilets

Using a public toilet can be worrying if you're not sure what facilities are available. Coloplast Charter offers a range of complementary items to help, including a 'No Waiting Card' for priority toilet access and a Radar Key for disabled toilet access. Contact us to request these items.

Privacy

Privacy is important for anyone using a public toilet, but even more so when performing ISC. Find some toilets that give you the privacy you need. Plan your day so you can use the toilet at times that suit your routine.

Cleanliness

When you perform ISC 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 a nurse or carer, performs your ISC 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 toilet door handle) after you've washed your hands, use hand sanitising gel or an antiseptic wipe before touching the catheter.

If you are prone to UTIs, you might be concerned about catheterising in public toilets. Remember, it is important that you empty your bladder regularly, as urine left in the bladder for long periods is one of the main causes of UTIs. So when you are out and about, even though it may be difficult to find a clean toilet, you shouldn't skip catheterisation.

Facilities

You should consider the layout of the public toilet too, such as how much space you have and where the sink is positioned in relation to the toilet. If you're in a wheelchair, consider the width of the doors and ramp access. Many people find it helpful to keep their supplies in a separate bag for easy access.

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 or discuss your questions and concerns with your healthcare professional.



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