



# Bladder & Bowel UK

Supporting people with bladder and bowel problems

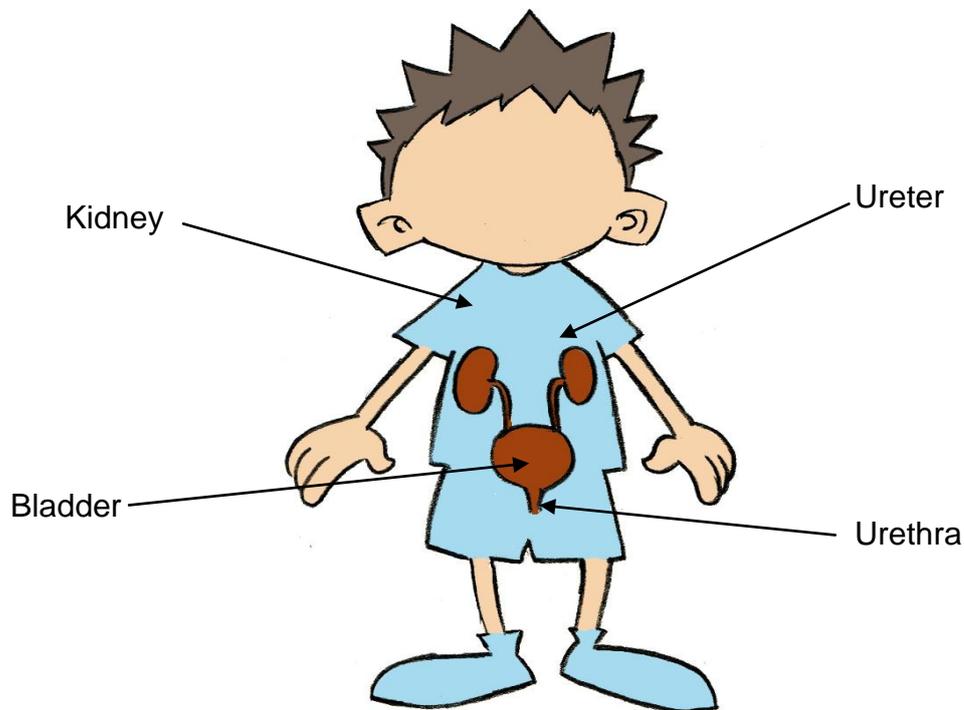
part of Disabled Living

## Talk about Clean Intermittent Catheterisation (CIC)



## Where does urine (wee) come from?

Urine (wee) is made in the kidneys. We each have two kidneys. Each kidney has a little tube that connects to the bladder. These tubes are called ureters. They allow the wee to travel from the kidney to the bladder. The wee is stored in the bladder. The bladder is like a stretchy balloon. When it is full it sends a message to your brain telling you that you need a wee. It's a bit like a telephone message; your bladder gives you a call and tells you to go to the toilet.



The urethra is also like a little tube. It connects the bladder to the outside world (wee travels down the urethra when the bladder is emptied). The urethra has a special control mechanism (called the sphincter) that keeps your wee in your bladder until your brain tells it to relax and let the wee drain out into the toilet.

For most people, the bladder tells the brain when it is getting full so they know to go to the toilet for a wee. If you have a problem that prevents the messages getting from your bladder to your brain, such as spina bifida or sacral agenesis, then your bladder and/ or the control mechanism (the sphincter) may not work properly. The sphincter may not relax enough to allow the wee to get out of the bladder. Or the bladder muscle may not work properly so it cannot push all the wee out.

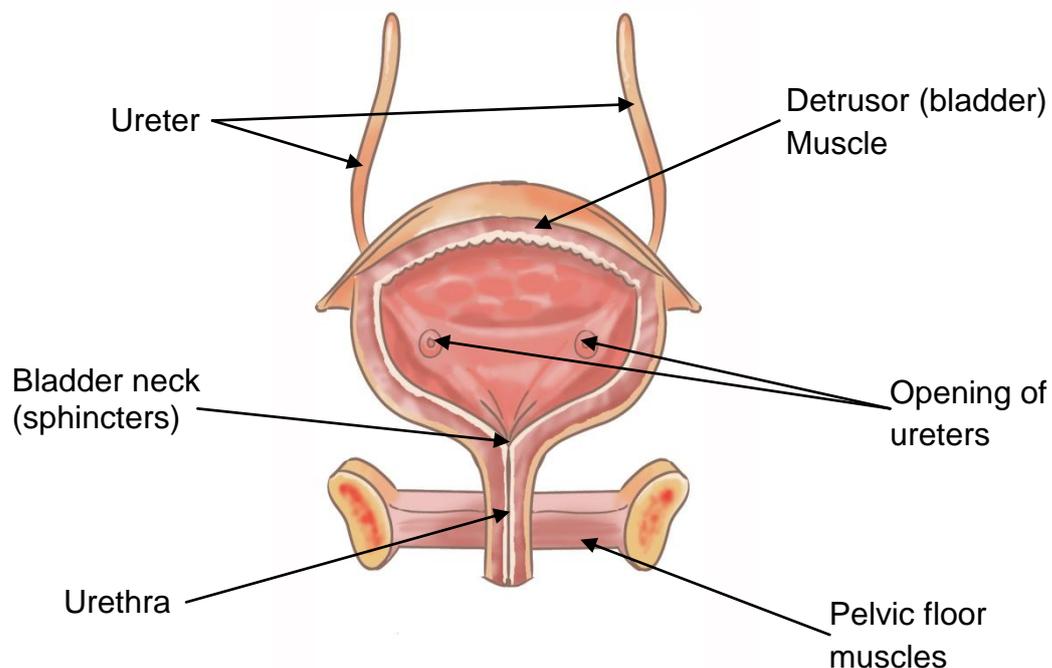


Diagram of the bladder

### **Why do I have to use a catheter to empty my bladder?**

There are a lot of reasons why you might need to use a catheter to empty your bladder. It might be because:

- Your bladder does not tell your brain when it is full of wee. If this happens your bladder will just empty, without you knowing and you will get very wet
- Your bladder does not empty completely. If this happens then there will always be some urine left behind after you have done

a wee. This can increase the risk of you developing a urinary tract infection (UTI)

- The pressure in your bladder is very high. If this happens emptying your bladder regularly with a catheter helps reduce the pressure. This will help to keep your kidneys healthy

## **What is Intermittent Catheterisation?**

Intermittent Catheterisation – sometimes called Clean Intermittent Catheterisation (CIC) – is when you pass a narrow tube (like a special very soft straw) through the urethra (the hole that wee normally comes out of) directly into the bladder. This enables all the wee to drain out of your bladder.

## **Will it hurt?**

No, catheterising your bladder will not hurt. Some children do not feel the catheter going in at all. Other children say that it just feels a bit funny at first.

## **How long will I have to use a catheter?**

Most children have to keep catheterising their bladders for a long time. Lots will need to do it all their lives to keep their bladder and kidneys healthy. However your doctor will check your bladder and kidneys and will tell you if anything needs to change or if you can change anything.

## **Can I learn to catheterise myself?**

Yes you can!

Although some children may always need some help to catheterise, most children will be able to learn to do it by themselves.

Your nurse will have lots of booklets and pictures she/he can show you which will help to explain how to catheterise. It is always easier to start

by learning to pull the catheter out before you learn how to put the catheter in, but your nurse will help you.



Most children learn to catheterize themselves while sitting on the toilet

### **Can I use the catheter when I am out and about - such as at school or on holiday?**

Yes you can. You can use your catheter wherever you feel most comfortable. Some children prefer to sit on the toilet, while others prefer lie down, or sit in their wheelchair. You just need to find the position that works best for you.

### **Are the different types of catheters available?**

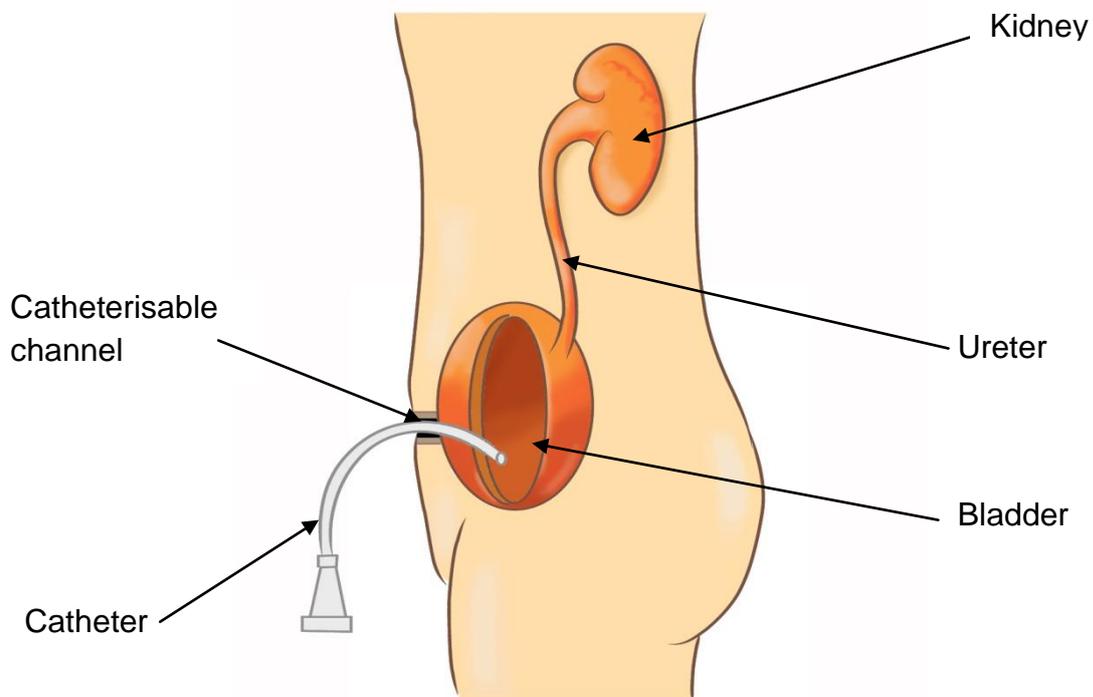
Yes it is important that boys only use catheters that are a longer length (sometimes called 'male' catheters). Girls can use any catheters they find suitable.

Intermittent catheters are usually lubricated (to make them slippery) so they slide in easily. Some catheters are not lubricated. These have to have separate lubrication applied before they can be used.

Your nurse should be able to show you a range of catheters and help you choose one you find easiest to use.

### **Some children catheterise their bladder through a little hole in their tummy – how does that work?**

A surgical procedure (operation) is done to make a special hole through the skin on the tummy. This operation is called a Mitrofanoff. The hole is very small and is called a catheterisable channel or a stoma. This hole, which is sometimes through the belly button, goes directly into the bladder. The hole can then be used to empty the bladder regularly. This is done by putting a catheter through the opening into the bladder.



**Mitrofanoff**

## Why do some children have it done?

There are a number of reasons why some children have a Mitrofanoff. These are:

- Some children find it easier to catheterise using a Mitrofanoff stoma – particularly girls who use a wheelchair
- There may be physical problems that make it difficult to catheterise via the urethra
- There may be problems with the bladder that mean catheterising via the urethra will not be keep the child dry

## Notes

My nurse is

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Their contact number is

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My catheter is called

.....

I use size

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I need to do my catheter at these times:

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Other information

.....

# Where can I get more information?

**Bladder and Bowel UK have a confidential helpline:**

**Tel: 0161 607 8219**

**Email: [bladderandboweluk@disabledliving.co.uk](mailto:bladderandboweluk@disabledliving.co.uk)**

**Website: [www.bladderandboweluk.co.uk](http://www.bladderandboweluk.co.uk)**

Bladder and Bowel UK, working under the umbrella of Disabled Living, provides impartial advice and information regarding resources, products and services for children and adults with bladder and bowel problems.



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