



Intermittent Self-Obturation for Urethral Stricture or Bladder Neck Contracture

What is Urethral stricture or Bladder Neck Contracture?

A urethral stricture is a scar that causes narrowing at one or more points in the urethra or at the point where the urethra connects to the bladder (a bladder neck contracture). This stricture makes it difficult to urinate by reducing or blocking the flow of urine out of the bladder. If the stricture is not treated properly, the increased strain on the bladder can damage and weaken the bladder muscle. This can lead to more serious bladder health problems.

What is self-obturation?

As part of your treatment plan you will be taught how to perform self-obturation (dilation) of the urethra. Obturation is a technique that requires passing a thin, flexible, plastic tube (catheter) into the urethra on a regular basis to keep the stricture open. You will be taught how to do this in the clinic by one of the nurses. Before you leave, you will be given the supplies needed to do this at home.

What are the supplies that are needed?

1. Antiseptic Towelettes - These can be purchased over the counter.
2. Water soluble lubricant - This can be purchased over the counter.
3. Appropriate size catheters - A prescription will be provided to you.

How do I do self obturation?

It is very important to be gentle and to generously lubricate the catheter that you will be using to self-obturate. Failure to do so can cause trauma to the urethral lining. Follow the steps listed below.

1. Wash your hands with soap and warm water.
2. Clean the urethral opening (meatus) with an antiseptic towelette.
3. Place a generous amount (about a tablespoon) of water soluble lubricant on a clean surface.
4. Lubricate the catheter and very gently pass it through the urethra all the way into the bladder and then withdraw it. You do not need to leave it in for any particular amount of time.
5. Clean the catheter after each use with soap and warm water. Be sure to rinse well inside and outside of the catheter. Set on a clean towel to air dry. It is best if you do not use bar soap as it can leave a film on the catheter.

You will be told how often you should self-obturate. You should gradually notice a stronger urine stream and a more open stricture. Over time you may be instructed to increase the size of the catheter.

Contact Information

If you have any questions, please contact the University of Michigan, Department of Urology at 734-936-7030 during business hours (8:00 am - 5:00 pm). After business hours and on weekends, please call 734-936-6267 and ask to speak with the Urology Resident on call. If you need to see a doctor right away please go to the nearest Emergency Room (ER). Have the ER doctor contact the University of Michigan urology resident on call for assistance.

Disclaimer: This document is for informational purposes only and is not intended to take the place of the care and attention of your personal physician or other professional medical services. Talk with your doctor if you have Questions about individual health concerns or specific treatment options.

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Author: Charlene Neer RN, BSN, MPA
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