

Urinary catheter irrigation

What is urinary catheter irrigation?

Irrigation is a procedure to open a plugged urinary catheter. Normal saline (NS) is inserted into the catheter to remove the plug, so that the urine can drain from the bladder.

How is the irrigation done?

1. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 15 seconds, rubbing all surfaces briskly, or use an alcohol hand sanitizer.
2. Gather equipment
 - Baby wipes or wipes
 - 60 ml catheter tip syringes (2)
 - clean towel
 - connection cover for drainage tubing
 - normal saline (NS)
3. Open a sterile catheter tip syringe package. (A “clean” catheter tip syringe may be used if approved by your doctor.) Keep the tip sterile--**do not** let it touch anything.
4. Draw up 10 ml of NS (or the amount directed by your doctor) into the syringe.
5. Place syringe of NS back into packaging to keep the tip sterile.
6. Place a towel under the catheter.
7. Using a wipe, clean the connection site between the catheter and the drainage tubing. Let it dry. Do not fan or blow on it.
8. With a gentle twist, disconnect the catheter from the drainage tubing. Cover the end of the tubing with a connection cover to keep it clean.
9. Insert an empty syringe into the catheter. Gently pull back on the plunger to see if any urine is in the bladder.
 - If urine comes out, use the syringe to gently empty the bladder.
10. Remove the syringe from the catheter.
11. Insert the syringe of NS into the catheter.
12. Gently push on the plunger of the syringe to slowly push the NS into the catheter. **Do not force the NS into the catheter.**
13. If the NS does not flow easily into the catheter, gently pull back on the plunger with one hand while holding the syringe steady with the other to aspirate (withdraw) fluid, using very little force. If you are unable to aspirate or irrigate the catheter, call the doctor.
14. After inserting the NS into the catheter, try to draw the NS back out.
15. Clean the connection site between the syringe and the catheter with a fresh wipe. Let it dry. Do not fan or blow on it.
16. Remove the cap from the drainage tubing. Scrub the tip of the tubing with a fresh wipe. Let it dry.

17. Remove the syringe from the catheter and insert the connecting tubing.
18. Check the tubing after reconnecting to see if urine is flowing out of the catheter. If no urine is flowing after 10 to 15 minutes, repeat the irrigation process. If there is still no urine coming out, call the doctor.
19. Wash your hands again.

What else do I need to know?

To clean the catheter tip syringe (if reuse of the syringe is allowed by your doctor):

1. Mix two solutions:
 - dish soap and water
 - solution of 1 part liquid bleach to 50 parts water (1 teaspoon liquid bleach to 1 cup water). Use a pure, fragrance-free, additive-free bleach, such as Hilex® or Clorox®. Do not use other products.
2. Take apart the syringe.
3. Rinse the syringe parts and connection cover with water.
4. Wash the parts in soapy water.
5. Rinse with water to remove the soap.

6. Soak in bleach solution for 30 minutes.
7. Rinse well with water.
8. Air dry on a clean towel. Change the towel every day.
9. If you cannot get the syringe clean, throw it away and use a new one.

When should I call the doctor?

- the flow of urine stops, your child has been drinking enough fluids, and you have irrigated the catheter
- you are unable to irrigate the catheter

Questions?

This sheet is not specific to your child, but provides general information. If you have any questions, please call the doctor.

For more reading material about this and other health topics, please call or visit the Family Resource Center library, or visit our Web site: www.childrensmn.org.

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