Coloplast Newsletter Article #2

Bladder Management and Intermittent Self-Catheterization

While likely not one of the first symptoms someone with MS will experience, more than 80% of people who have MS report symptoms of bladder dysfunction\(^1\), although often these symptoms tend to appear, on average six years into the illness\(^2\).

For those who experience incomplete voiding (or under activity), many people will need to manage their bladder dysfunction by self-catheterizing several times a day.

Intermittent Self-Catheterization (ISC) involves the periodic insertion of a thin hollow tube (known as a catheter) into the bladder through the urethra, in order to empty the bladder. When routinely performed, ISC can fully replace normal bladder emptying and is typically recommended to manage emptying dysfunction. While it is normal to feel uncertainty about ISC, with the proper technique and product, it can be a painless and normal activity to help manage incontinence.

When you have bladder dysfunction, it is important that your bladder is emptied regularly to prevent a number of complications, such as urinary tract infections. In fact, ISC is a frequently recommended way of managing bladder emptying dysfunction as it offers many benefits over other bladder management techniques such as indwelling catheters\(^1,2,3\). ISC can help to restore continence and will allow you to take control of your bladder management, providing you with greater freedom to do what you want and help you to improve your overall quality of life.

There are a number of different catheter options that you can choose from that fit a variety of individual needs. Some catheter options include ‘uncoated’ (rubber catheters, silicone or PVC (polyvinyl chloride) that require additional gel for lubrication) and hydrophilic catheters which are pre-coated for safety and ease-of-use. There are now even compact catheters which are extremely discreet – no one would even know that they were catheters at all!

It is important to review the various catheter options that are available and choose a catheter that will offer you the opportunity to live life to the fullest.

The MS Society gratefully acknowledges the support of Coloplast Canada for the education grant supporting this publication/program.

For more information on Coloplast Canada or to receive free samples of Coloplast product, visit: www.coloplast.ca

References