

INTERMITTENT SELF MEATAL DILATATION

AN INFORMATION LEAFLET

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What Is a Meatal Stricture / Meatal Stenosis?

A meatal stricture is a narrowing at the end of your urethra (the tube from your bladder through which you pass urine). Sometimes the stricture can be so severe that the external meatus (the opening at the end of the penis) becomes very tiny, like a pinhole. Meatal stenosis is a similar condition which can also cause a narrowing of your urethra and make passing urine very difficult.

What causes a Meatal Stricture / Meatal Stenosis?

- Repeated inflammation of your foreskin (balanitis).
- Infection of the urinary tract.
- Urethral trauma from instrumentation or catheterisation.
- Lichen sclerosis

What are the Signs and Symptoms of Meatal Stricture / Meatal Stenosis?

- Very slow or split stream of urine.
- Taking a long time to empty your bladder.
- Dribbling urine usually after passing urine.
- Needing to strain to push your urine out.
- In severe cases the flow of urine can stop altogether – this needs urgent medical attention.

What are the Treatments for Meatal Stricture / Meatal Stenosis?

- **Intermittent self meatal dilatation** - In some men it is possible that the narrowing of your urethra may re-occur. To reduce this risk you may be taught how to perform intermittent self meatal dilatation.

What is Meatal Dilatation?

- Meatal Dilatation is a procedure which involves you passing a short catheter into the end of your urethra. The catheter is passed beyond the narrow section and this helps to keep the urethra open.

What Are The Alternatives?

- **Meatal dilatation** - If your urethra is not too narrow, it can be dilated or stretched in theatre under local anaesthetic or a general anaesthetic (when you are put completely to sleep) using catheters (soft, hollow plastic tubes) which are graduated in size.
- **Meatotomy** - A small operation to stretch or cut through the narrow tissue in your urethra may be necessary. This is called a 'meatotomy'. Occasionally an additional procedure called circumcision (removal of the foreskin) may be necessary if repeated infections and inflammation (balanitis) at the tip of the penis has resulted in a tight foreskin.

What are the risks of Meatal Dilatation?

- **Pain.**

At first it may be a little painful or uncomfortable to pass the catheter, especially if you have had recent surgery. This, however, should improve with time and most men are able to tolerate the procedure with little discomfort.

- **Bleeding.**

You may see a little blood on the end of the catheter after performing the procedure or experience a little bleeding from the urethra. This is nothing to worry about and should soon stop. If the bleeding becomes heavy and prolonged then contact your healthcare professional.

- **Infection.**

It is important to wash your hands and penis before performing meatal dilatation so that no bugs are passed up into the bladder. However, if you experience pain or burning when passing urine, notice that your urine is cloudy or smelly or, especially, if you start to feel unwell (i.e. high temperature, abdominal pain or flu like symptoms), contact your GP or healthcare professional immediately as you may have a urine infection.

- **Recurrent Stricture**

If you notice a reduction in your flow of urine or if it becomes difficult to pass the catheter into the urethra, it may be because the narrowing has re-occurred. If this happens seek advice from you healthcare professional.

General Advice

- **For how long and how often should I perform Meatal Dilatation?**

As everyone is different, a personalised regime will be agreed between yourself and your healthcare professional as to how often and for how long you should perform the procedure.

- **How do I get my catheters?**

The catheters are available on prescription from your GP and a home delivery service direct from the manufacturer can be arranged.

- **Travelling Abroad.**

If you are travelling remember to pack enough catheters to last the length of your holiday.

If you have any questions you want to ask, you can use this space below to make notes to remind you.

Source

In compiling this information leaflet, a number of recognised professional bodies have been used, including NHS Direct and the British Association of Urological Surgeons. Accredited good practice guidelines have been used.

If you have a visual impairment this leaflet can be made available in bigger print or on audiotape. If you require either of these options please contact the Health Information Centre on 0161 922 5332

If you would like any further information please telephone the Urology Nurse Specialists at your local Urology Department on:

Stepping Hill	0161 419 5695
Tameside	0161 922 6696/6698
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