Stricture Guide

Information for patients

Urology Department

Information taken from the Astra Tech booklet on LoFric® catheters

Leaflet 8604909
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General advice
If you experience any of the following
• Shivering
• High temperature
• Fever
• Cloudy and or smelly urine
You may have an infection. Drink extra fluids and contact your health-care professional or G.P.

If a few specks of blood appear when removing the catheter, don’t worry. This sometimes happens and should clear up in a few days. If you the bleeding continues or can be seen every time you pass urine you should contact your healthcare professional.

If the catheter is difficult to insert, it is usually because your sphincter muscle is not relaxed. This can happen initially if you are tense and cannot manage to relax. A good tip is to cough a couple of times so the catheter slips in easily. Also, some people find that they can relax themselves by taking a bath. You can also apply light but firm pressure on the catheter.

If you have difficulties removing the catheter, leave it for a few moments and try again. If it still won’t come out, try coughing as this will often loosen it.

Travelling abroad
Ask your doctor for a letter stating that the LoFric® catheters you are taking with you are for treating your stricture. This can save you a lot of trouble with custom officials. If you have any doubts about the quality of the water, use bottled mineral water or something similar.

REMEMBER TO TAKE A SUFFICIENT SUPPLY OF LOFRIC® WITH YOU.
Useful Advice

How often do I need to perform ISD
You will be advised by your healthcare professional when to start Intermittent Self Dilatation and how often you should repeat the therapy.

If you do not perform ISD as often as instructed then your stricture may reform and further surgery may be needed. If your urine flow slows down over time, then the frequency your perform ISD may need to be increased.

What size LoFric® do I need?
The thicker the catheter the more effective will be the dilation. A size 18 catheter is an ideal size. LoFric® catheters are available in both male and the shorter female length. Male catheters are also available with a standard rounded tip (Nelton) and with a curved (Tiemann) tip. You will be advised which size, length and tpe you need.

Washing
In order to avoid washing away the natural bacterial flora which protects you against infection, washing the genital area once a day with mild soap and water is recommended.

Before Catheterising
Relax your pelvic floor and sphincter muscles. Do not press down with your abdominal muscles.

Bowel habits
It is importat that your bowels open regularly, ie on a daily basis. So eat a well balanced diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables. If you become constipated, consult your doctor or nurse as this may interfere with your ISD.

How much should I Drink
You should drink at least 6-8 cups of fluid every day i.e 5 mugs, 2.5 pints or 1.5litres.

What is a urethral stricture
A urethral stricture is a narrowing or restriction of the urethra (the tube from your bladder through which you pass urine) and has been a familiar problem to medical science for thousands of years. Some people are born with a urethral stricture, but they can occur at any age. It is possible to have more than one stricture. In years gone by, urethral strictures were usually caused by infection.

Today urethral strictures are frequently caused by injury, sometimes a side effect of the examination and treatment of a variety of ailments in the urinary tract. The membranes of the urethra can become damaged, which may lead to the formation of scar tissue. This can cause a variety of problems, including difficulty in passing urine, a poor urinary stream, difficulty in starting the flow of urine, dribbling incontinence, taking a long time to pass urine, a spray effect when passing urine and getting up at night to pass urine.

Now there is a form of therapy that prevents strictures returning. This effectively eliminates the need for repeat surgery, and the procedure is so simple to perform you can carry it out yourself at home. It is called Intermittent Self Dilatation (ISD) and is often known as the LoFric® Stricture Therapy.

What is ISD?
Intermittent Self Dilatation (ISD) is when you pass a plastic tube called a catheter, down your urethra to keep your stricture from closing over.

Using LoFric®, this is very easy to do and does not cause damage to your bladder or urethra, even if ISD is performed over long periods of time.

Used in conjunction with the directions you have received from your healthcare professional, this booklet is a valuable guide to Intermittent Self Dilatation.
Treatment of urethral strictures
You may be due to have, or have had, an operation called a urethrotomy where your urethral stricture was gently cut, so opening up the narrowing that has made it difficult for you to pass urine. However, the scars left by the incision mean that there is always a risk that the stricture could return.

Intermittent Self Dilatation is a therapy used to prevent the return of strictures. Dilatation simply means “stretching” and it involves you passing a low low-friction LoFric® catheter into your urethra to stop it narrowing again.

Intermittent Self Dilatation has been recommended by your consultant. Your advisor will explain exactly how you do it and how often. Your advisor will also recommend the correct size LoFric® you require. You probably will not have to undergo any operations, nor have to take any more pain relieving medication.

Intermittent Self Dilatation is very simple, very safe and it leads to an improved quality of life.

In women, the urethra is 3-4cm long. It’s lies between the clitoris and the vagina. At first many women find it useful to use a mirror.
Women: How to use LoFric® for ISD

To start with, it can be useful to use a mirror to find the opening of your urethra, but in the long term, it will be an advantage to be able to ‘feel’ your way, because this allows for greater flexibility later on.

1. Wash your hands with soap and water and prepare your LoFric®.

2. You can choose between several different positions and it is important during the learning phase to find the one that suits you best. You can sit on the toilet, however many women find it easier to sit on the chair or the side of the bed.

3. Push your pelvis forward slightly so you can see better.

4. With the index and middle finger of one hand, spread the labia apart and gently upwards. You will now be able to see the opening to your urethra which looks like a little star.

5. You may be instructed to insert the catheter until urine comes out. If so, make a slight bend in the funnel end of the catheter, so that the flow of urine does not take you by surprise.

6. Slide the LoFric® slowly and smoothly into the opening of your urethra. The amount of catheter you need to insert is dependent on where your stricture is. Check with your healthcare professional where your stricture is and how far in you will have to insert the catheter. The picture opposite shows the most common site of strictures circled in red.

7. Slowly withdraw the Catheter and dispose of it in the normal way.

8. Finish by washing your hands.

Preparing LoFric® for use

Always start by washing your hands

1. Open the pack carefully. Pull the tabs slightly apart by 5-6cm.

2. Fill the pack nearly to the top with cold mains tap water.

3. The pack has a self-adhesive tag. Just remove the blue patch and attach the pack to convenient surface.

   Note:LoFric® must not be placed on paper or cloth—as this surface will absorb the liquid coating.

4. Wait for at least 30 seconds for the special coating to be activated by the water. Then LoFric® is ready to use.
Men: How to use LoFric® for ISD

1. Wash your hands with soap and water and prepare your LoFric®.
   Find a suitable position, either sitting or standing. If you are not near a toilet, have a container at hand to catch the urine.

2. Gently pull your foreskin back if you have one. Wash the end of your penis with soap and water. Hold your penis up towards your stomach. In this position, your urethra is extended and becomes U-shaped, making it easier to guide the LoFric® into your bladder. Do not squeeze your penis too hard as this can block the opening to your urethra.

3. You may be instructed to insert the catheter until urine comes out. If so make a slight bend in the funnel end of the catheter, so the flow of urine does not take you by surprise.

4. Slide the LoFric® slowly and smoothly into the opening of your urethra. The amount of catheter you need to insert is dependent on where your stricture is and how far in you will have to insert the catheter. Common sites of strictures are circled in red in the picture opposite.

5. Hold your penis up towards your stomach again and slowly withdraw the catheter.

6. Gently pull your foreskin back in place and dispose of the catheter in the normal way.

7. Finish by washing your hands.

In men, the urethra is 10-15 cm long and shaped like the letter S. When inserting LoFric®, you should straighten out the “S” by lifting your penis towards your stomach.