

Understanding Urinary Tract Infections

A basic guide to keeping
your bladder healthy

Kristian



About this booklet

Coloplast develops products and services that make life easier for people with very personal and private medical conditions. At Coloplast, we understand what you're going through because we've helped hundreds of thousands of people living with an intimate healthcare condition. Our goal is to help you find the right products and solutions to lead an active, rewarding life.

Since our founding in 1957, we have worked closely together with healthcare professionals and users to create products and solutions that are sensitive to their needs. This journey has given us a deep understanding of continence issues and we know that urinary tract infections (UTIs) are particularly concerning for catheter users. In this

booklet, we will answer some of the most common questions around UTIs. We have also gathered some facts and helpful advice that can help you keep your bladder healthy in order to minimise the risk of UTIs.



Concerned about UTIs? You're not alone

The precise cause of UTIs is unclear, and while there are several practical steps you can take to reduce your risk of having one, you should always consult a healthcare professional if you get one, or if you have questions.

On the following pages you will find some good advice, grouped into three areas to give you a simple overview:

- ▶ **Hygiene**
- ▶ **Routine & compliance**
- ▶ **Catheter options**

A widespread issue. UTIs are a common issue for many catheter users. If you have worries, or feel uncertain about how to reduce your risk of UTIs, you're not alone. Indeed, with many catheter users experiencing two or more UTIs every year, they represent a significant source of concern.

What catheter users told us¹



Users have
an average of

2.7

UTIs per year

81%
say

not having UTIs
would represent
good bladder health

45%

consider UTIs one
of the biggest
issues in their life

UTIs are a daily
concern for

41%

of all intermittent
catheter users



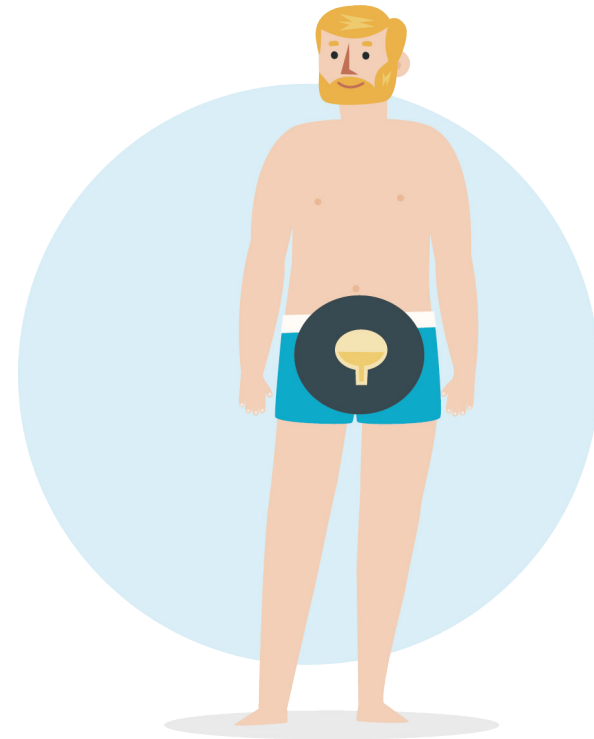
¹ Source: IC user survey (Countries: US, UK, DE, NL, FR, IT), January 2016 (n=2942)

What is a UTI?

A UTI is only diagnosed when there are bacteria in the urine with one or more of the symptoms mentioned on the next page.

In most people, urine is sterile (free from germs or bacteria), and the presence of bacteria in the urinary tract does not necessarily cause a UTI. If, however, the bacteria grow and multiply to a certain level, they may cause an infection of the urinary tract that may need to be treated.

Anybody can get a UTI though there is a higher risk if you are a catheter user. Women also tend to get more UTIs due to their comparatively shorter urethra (the channel through which urine is passed) which gives easier access for bacteria to enter into the bladder.





It is important that you seek and follow the advice of your healthcare provider in the diagnosis and treatment of a UTI.

How can I tell if I have a UTI?

If you have any of the signs and symptoms² detailed below, it indicates the possibility of an infection. However you might not feel pain and bladder irritation if the nerves to your bladder are affected. Remember, a UTI will only be diagnosed when there are also bacteria in the urine. You should always consult your healthcare provider to confirm the diagnosis and get the appropriate treatment:



Fever/sweating



Pain when urinating



Increased frequency of urination



Increased urge to urinate



Flank pain
(area below the ribs and above the pelvis)



Shivering and increased muscle spasms
in the body and bladder



Dark-coloured and strong-smelling urine



Cloudy/ bloody urine

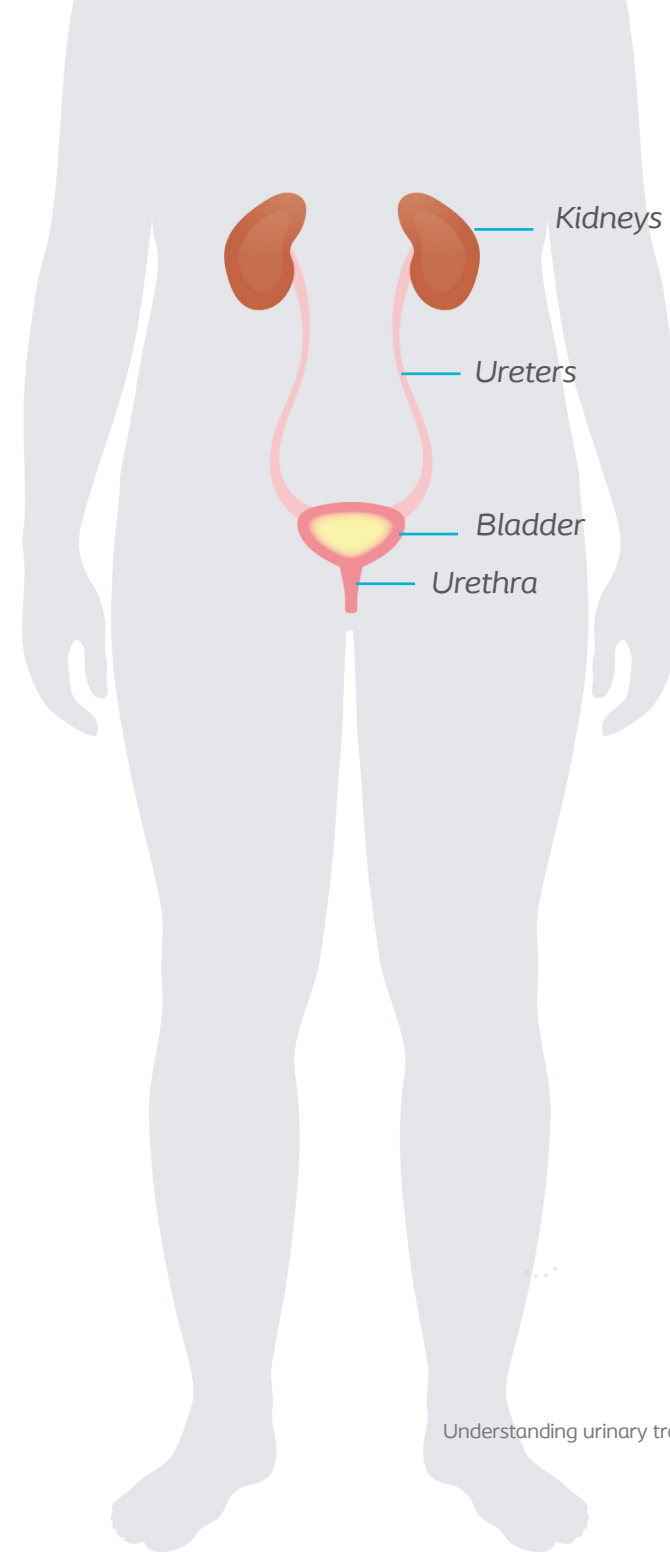
² Source: IC user survey (Countries: US, UK, DE, NL, FR, IT), January 2016 (n=2942)



How does the bladder work?

Understanding how a healthy bladder functions is helpful for you to understand.

The bladder is situated in the lower urinary tract together with the urethral sphincters (keeps your bladder closed to keep you continent) and the urethra (the tube that leads urine from the bladder to the outside opening). The bladder stores urine that is then expelled via the urethra which carries it out of the body.



When the bladder is working optimally, you should feel the urge to go to the toilet when your bladder is partly full and then decide if it is a good time to urinate. Passing urine is a controlled and voluntary activity. The key to bladder health is emptying **regularly** and **completely**.

Bladder activity is regulated by your brain and the nervous system running through the spine. The net of muscles in the bladder has stretch receptors, which respond when the bladder begins to fill with urine. All the stretch receptors are connected to nerves, which send signals up through the spine to the brain that it's soon time to urinate.

When people normally feel the urge to urinate, the first reaction is to squeeze the sphincter muscles. This lifts the pelvic floor in order to hold the urine inside the body until it's convenient to urinate. When it's a convenient time to urinate, the brain sends the message back that it's OK to pass the urine.

People should optimally urinate 4-8 times a day, and to minimise the risk of UTI it's important to empty the bladder completely, as urine left in the bladder can cause urinary tract infections.

If you cannot empty your bladder naturally, it is important to empty using a catheter. If you use an intermittent catheter, you should catheterise as often as your healthcare provider recommends - which is typically (but not always) 4-6 times per day.



Maintain good personal hygiene

UTIs may result when bacteria –perhaps left behind after improper hand washing, or present near the urethral opening – are introduced into the urinary tract when you catheterise.



That's why it's important to wash your hands with soap and water before carefully cleaning around the urethral opening or urethra before inserting your intermittent catheter.

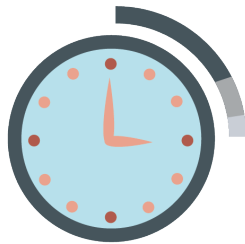
Also, be careful how you clean yourself after urinating or after a bowel movement. Wipe from front to back so that bacteria from your anal area are not pushed into the urethral opening or urethra. It is a good idea to discuss optimal bowel emptying habits with your healthcare provider, as constipation is also known to cause UTIs.





Regularly empty your bladder completely

Each time you catheterise, you remove urine in the bladder along with any bacteria that might be present in it. That's why it's important to create a regular flow through the bladder in order to "flush" it with fresh fluid (urine) during the day.



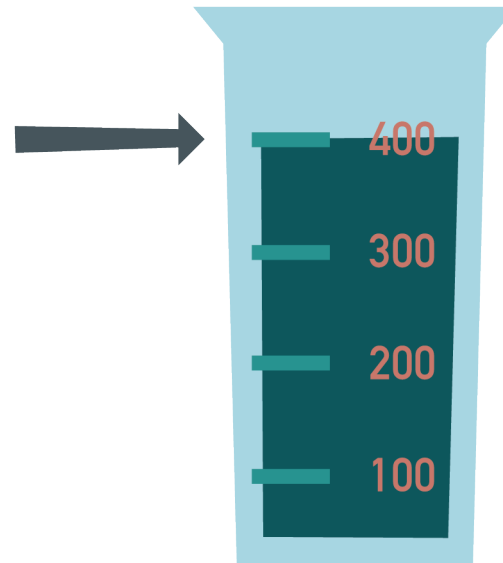
Maintaining a catheterisation schedule can thus help prevent UTIs. You should empty your bladder completely, as often as your healthcare provider recommends – which is typically 4-6 times per day.



Check if you empty often enough

Every once in a while, measure the amount of urine you empty.

Your goal should be to empty between 250 ml and 400 ml as this helps you avoid overfilling your bladder and prevents leaking. If you empty more than 400 ml, or less than 150 ml, you should consult your healthcare provider, to review your catheterisation routine.



Drink 6-8 glasses of fluid every day

Every person needs daily fluids to maintain their health. The recommended daily amount for almost everybody is 6-8 glasses per day.

If you are in doubt as to the amount that is best for you based on your medical condition(s), consult your healthcare provider

Water is the ideal choice. Beverages containing caffeine (cola, coffee, tea and some energy drinks) and artificial sweeteners are known bladder irritants and may need to be kept to a minimum.





Out and about

It is important to maintain your catheterisation schedule when you are out and about. However, being in an environment you're not used to might make it difficult to stick to your usual routine. Being fully prepared for any eventuality can help you overcome that.

Consider pre-packing a kit so you have all the supplies you might need. The checklist on this page can help you prepare.

There are also catheters developed especially for use outside of the home such as catheters with sleeves or catheters with drainage bags.

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You will find an overview of Coloplast's range of intermittent catheters on the last page. If you would like to know, more visit:

[Coloplast.co.uk](https://www.coloplast.co.uk)





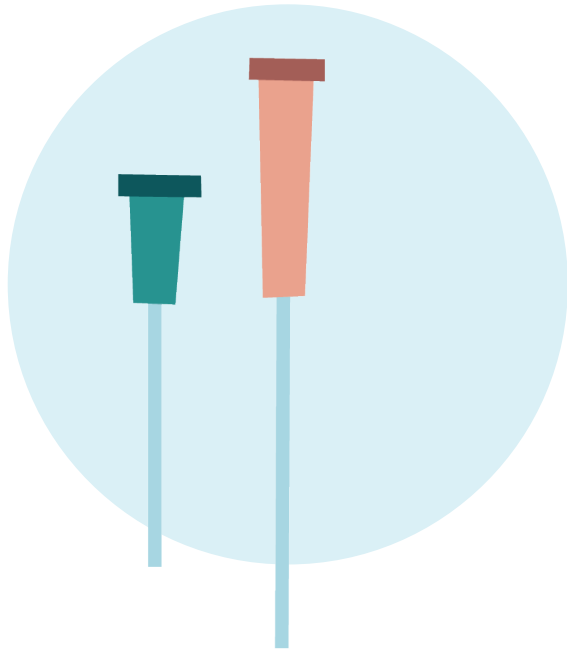
Checklist

- Catheters
(always bring extra)
- Antibacterial gel or
hand-wash
- Wipes
- No waiting card
- Leg mirror (women)
- Small rubbish sack



Use a sterile catheter every time you catheterise

To prevent UTIs, we recommend you use a new, sterile well-lubricated catheter every time you catheterise.



A **coated catheter** (hydrophilic-coated or pre-lubricated) can help lessen friction as you insert and remove your catheter. It makes catheterisation more comfortable and convenient. Studies, data and findings also link them to lower rates of infection^{3,4} and less urethral damage^{3,5,6} compared with other catheters.



You will find an overview of Coloplast's range of intermittent catheters on the last page. If you would like to know more visit:

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³ Cardenas et al. 2011, ⁴ De Ridder et al. 2005, ⁵ Stensballe et al. 2005, ⁶ Sutherland et al. 1996.

Choose a catheter that suits your lifestyle

Different lifestyles or everyday activities sometimes require different intermittent catheterisation solutions. Catheters come in many variants: standard length catheters, compact catheters that can fit into your purse or pocket, and catheter sets where a urine bag is attached to the catheter.



Finding the right catheter is a very personal choice and the best one for you might not be the first one that you try. Research shows that being satisfied with your catheter solution is very important for maintaining your schedule and thereby ensuring good bladder health^{7,8}. That's why it is important to find the catheter solution that suits you. You might need to try different ones to find one that fits you the best.



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⁷ Barbosa et al.2012, ⁸ Wyndaele JJ Spinal Cord 2002

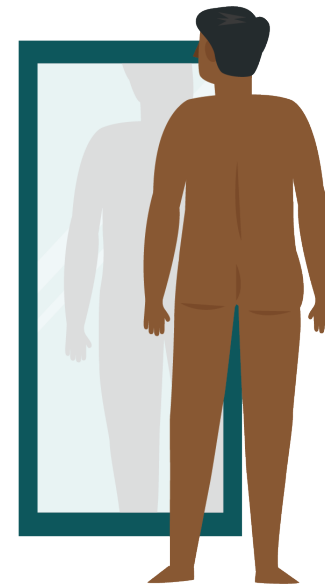
Remember, your overall health is important too

The advice in this booklet is intended to answer some of the most common questions you have about UTIs, and to help minimise your risk of getting one.

It is also important to remember the importance of staying in good overall health. By getting enough sleep, eating healthily and exercising regularly, you will strengthen your immune system and increase your chances of preventing UTIs.



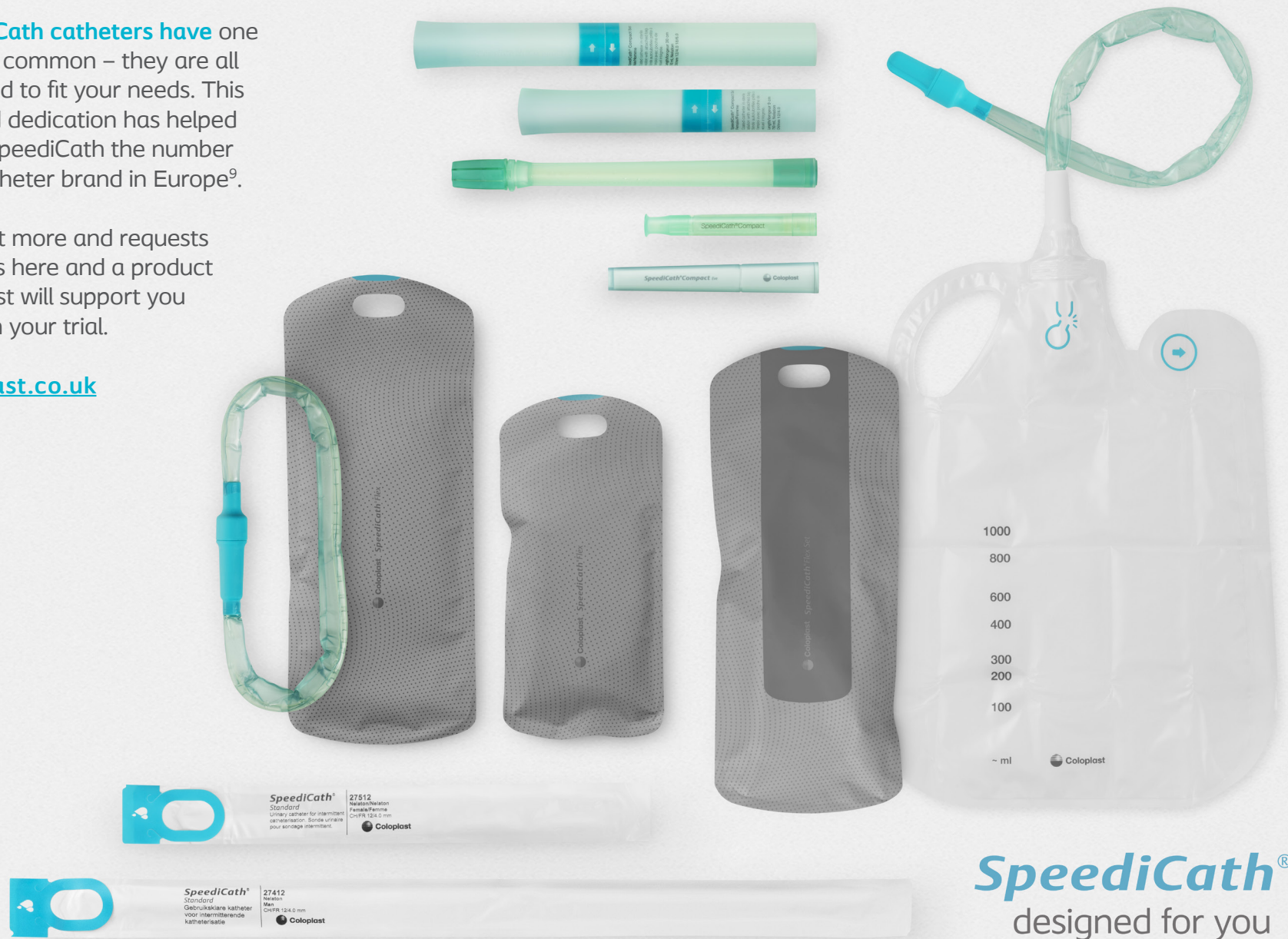
You should always follow the specific instructions provided by your healthcare provider, and those included with your intermittent catheterisation solution. If you still suffer from frequent UTIs despite all these precautions, talk to your healthcare provider for more advice.



SpeediCath catheters have one thing in common – they are all designed to fit your needs. This focused dedication has helped make SpeediCath the number one catheter brand in Europe⁹.

Find out more and requests samples here and a product specialist will support you through your trial.

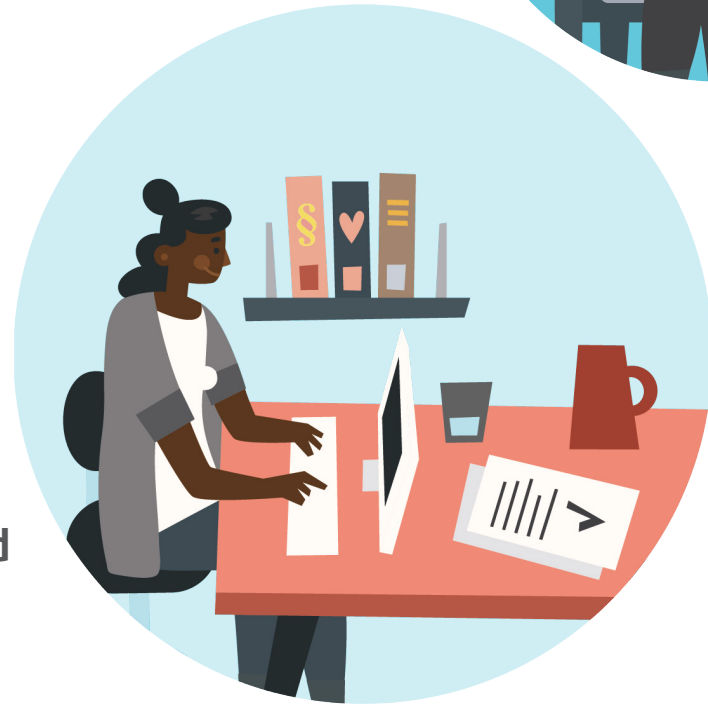
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designed for you

⁹ Coloplast sales data, GERS, IMS, Assobiomedica, Nefemed, PCA, 2015/16

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Coloplast develops products and services that make life easier for people with very personal and private medical conditions. Working closely with the people who use our products, we create solutions that are sensitive to their special needs. We call this intimate healthcare. Our business includes Ostomy Care, Continence Care, Wound and Skin Care and Interventional Urology. We operate globally and employ about 12,500 employees.

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