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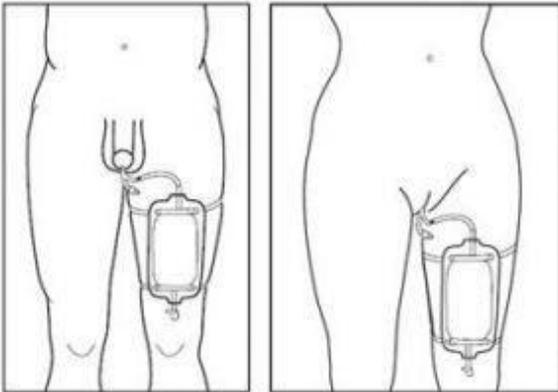
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Urinary Catheter Care

What is a urinary catheter?



A urinary catheter is a long, hollow, rubber drainage tube that is inserted into the body. It enters where you urinate and goes into the bladder. A small balloon is inflated at the tip of the tube once it is in your bladder. The balloon helps to keep the catheter in place. The other end of the tube is connected to a collection bag. The purpose of the catheter is to drain urine from the bladder. Your doctor will determine how long the urinary catheter will remain in place.

Why a urinary catheter?

The following are reasons your doctor may have asked that you have a urinary catheter:

- If your doctors need to know exactly how much urine you are putting out to provide appropriate care for you
- To allow your bladder to heal after surgical procedures
- If you cannot completely empty your bladder when you urinate
- If urine often leaks from your bladder that you cannot control, and you also have signs of a bladder infection or your kidneys are not working well
- If you have open wounds or pressure sores around your genitals or buttocks that are frequently soiled with urine because you cannot control the flow of urine
- If you have a severe illness or disability that makes moving or changing your clothes very painful

There may be other reasons you have your urinary catheter.

General Instructions For Care

- You may shower with your catheter in place. Avoid extremely hot or cold water.
- Twice per day and after each bowel movement, wash around the catheter where it enters your body. Use soap and water.
- Drink plenty of fluids to help keep your urine flowing well. Drink 6 to 8 glasses each day.
- Avoid sexual intercourse.
- Avoid becoming constipated or straining with a bowel movement. It will help if you eat foods that are high in fiber and drink plenty of fluids.
- Never pull on your catheter for any reason.
- Only family members who have been taught how to help you with your catheter care should handle the drainage bag and equipment.

Draining The Leg Bag

A leg bag is a urine collection bag that is strapped to your leg. It is smaller than the bag that you may use at night. This smaller bag allows you to move around more easily. However, you must empty the leg bag every 3 to 4 hours. To drain the bag, follow these steps:

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Unfasten the lower leg strap.
- Remove the cap and open the clamp. Do not touch the drain port with your fingers or allow it to touch the urine measuring container or toilet seat.
- If you are supposed to measure the urine, drain it into a container that is being used only for this purpose. Measure the amount of urine, record it, then empty the urine into the toilet. If you do not need to measure, simply drain the urine into the toilet.
- After the urine has drained completely, wipe the drain port and the cap with a cotton ball or gauze soaked with an antiseptic solution such as rubbing alcohol or povidine iodine (such as betadine). Close the clamp and fasten the lower leg strap.
- Wash your hands with soap and water.

Draining The Larger Collection Bag

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Release the green tubing from the plastic holder by squeezing the metal clamp. See figure 1 below.
- If you are supposed to measure the urine, drain it into a container that is being used only for this purpose. Measure the amount of urine, record it, and then empty the urine into the toilet, taking care that the tube does not touch the toilet. See figure 2 below.

- After the urine has drained completely, squeeze the metal clamp until you feel it click shut. Wipe the tip of the tubing with a cotton ball or gauze soaked with an antiseptic solution such as rubbing alcohol or povidine iodine (such as Betadine).
- Return the green tubing to the holder.
- Wash your hands with soap and water.
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How To Care For Your Drainage Bags

Follow these directions to care for either your leg bag or your night drainage bag:

- After disconnecting the bag and replacing it with another, wash the used bag with soap and warm water. Then rinse with water.
- Disinfect the used bag with a mixture of white (distilled) vinegar and water. Do not use yellow (cider) vinegar.
- > Mix 1 1/4 cups of white vinegar with 2 quarts of water.
- > Rinse the bag well with this solution to help reduce urine odor. Do not rinse the bag with water after using the vinegar solution.
- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Special note: You may use both types of drainage bags for up to 1 month. After 1 month, you will need new bags. You can buy new bags at most home health care supply stores.

Changing Collection Bags

During the day, you may want to use a leg bag. At night, you can change it to a larger collection bag.

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Drain the leg bag.
- Unfasten the leg straps.
- Clean the connection site with a cotton ball soaked in an antiseptic solution such as rubbing alcohol or povidine iodine solution (betadine).
- Disconnect the leg bag, cap the opening, and set aside.
- Attach the end of the new bag.
- If you are attaching the larger collection bag for overnight use, hang the bag lower than your body when you are in bed.
- If you are attaching the leg bag, wrap the elastic bands around your leg and clip them in place. Always be sure there are no kinks in the catheter tubing.
- Follow the directions under “How to care for your drainage bags.”
- Wash your hands with soap and water when you are finished.

Getting Ready For Bed

When your night drainage bag is connected and you are ready to go to bed, decide on which side of the bed you want the drainage bag to hang. Tape the drainage tubing to the thigh of the leg that will be next to the side of the bed where the bag will hang. Use hypoallergenic tape, which is available at most drug stores and supermarkets. Leave some slack in the line so you will not pull on the catheter when you move while sleeping.

When you get into bed, set up the drainage tubing so it does not kink or loop. Then hang the drainage bag by its hook from the side of the bed frame. Be sure to keep the drainage bag below the level of the bladder at all times, whether you are lying, sitting, or standing. Do not hang the bag from the headboard or footboard of the bed, or from a chair beside the bed.

What To Expect

It is normal to expect bladder spasms, the sensation of having to urinate while the catheter is in place. This can potentially be controlled with medications if necessary.

Additionally, it can be normal to leak around the catheter as well due to bladder spasms. As long as the catheter itself is still draining well, this is okay.

Finally, you may have blood in or around your catheter. If the catheter is flowing well, and the color is not dark red with clots, this is okay. Be sure to hydrate well to keep the urine dilute.

How To Remove Your Catheter ([click here](#))

You may have been instructed on a date and time to remove your own catheter. You should only do this if you have been instructed by your physician. Often, you will have an appointment to assure complete bladder emptying about 6-8 hours after removal of your catheter.