

Caring for your Urinary Catheter

You have an indwelling urinary catheter; this drains urine from your bladder into a large bedside bag or a smaller bag that is strapped to the leg. There will be different things you will want to familiarize yourself with.



Always wash your hands for 15 to 30 seconds before and after you take care of your catheter. Dry hands off with a clean towel. then turn off faucet.

1) Drain the Bag

- Empty your drainage bag when it is about half full.
- If the short drainage tube is inserted into a pocket on the bag, take the drainage tube out of the pocket.
- Hold the drainage tube over a toilet or a dedicated measuring container. Open the valve.
- Don't touch the tip of the valve or let it touch your hands, the toilet or container.



2) Clean the Drainage Tube

- When the bag is empty, clean the tip of the drainage valve with an alcohol wipe.
- Clamp and close the valve.
- Reinsert the drainage tube into the pocket, if there is one.



3) Clean Your Skin every day

- Where the catheter comes out of your body, cleanse with a wash cloth and warm soapy water. You should also clean after every bowel movement to prevent infection. Make sure to use a different cloth.
 - Avoid pulling on the tubing when cleaning so you don't injure the urethra.
 - Don't apply antibiotic ointment or any other antibacterial product to the urethra.
 - Don't use lubricant on the urethra.
 - Don't apply powder to the genital area or to the tubing.

4) Check the Position of the Catheter Drainage Bag and Tubing

- Always keep the drainage bag and tubing below the level of your bladder (the level of your waist). This keeps the urine from re-entering your bladder.
- To prevent pulling. Secure the catheter on your thigh and on your lower abdomen. Ask your nurse.
- If there are kinks, clogs, or you can't see into the tubing, you'll need to change to new tubing as you were shown by your nurse or health care provider.

5) Changing the Drainage Bag

- You may want a larger collection bag for at night when you sleep and a smaller bag while awake.
- Wash your hands, get an alcohol wipe, get your clean drainage bag, and make sure the drainage valve is closed.
- Use an alcohol wipe to cleanse where the catheter and the collection bag connects.
- Disconnect the bag from the catheter.
- Use a second alcohol wipe and cleanse both the open catheter and the open drainage tubing.
- Connect the catheter to the clean drainage bag

6) Clean the Drainage Bag

- Clean the drainage bag after any time that you disconnect it (for example, if you switch from a leg bag)
- Have a clean backup bag or other drainage device ready.
- Follow these steps:
 - Wash your hands well with soap and water.
 - Disconnect the bag from the catheter tubing. Connect the tubing to the backup or drainage device.
 - Drain any remaining urine from the bag you just disconnected. Close the drainage valve.
 - Pour some tap water into the bag. Swish the water around, being sure to get the corners of the bag.
 - Open the drainage valve to drain the water. Close the drainage valve.
 - Fill the bag half full with 1 part vinegar and 3 parts water using baster, syringe or funnel.
 - Swish the solution around and allow it to remain in the bag for 30 minutes.
 - Drain the vinegar solution and rinse the bag with cold tap water.
 - Hang the bag to drain and air-dry with the cap and the drainage spout open
 - After drying, store in a covered container
 - Clean the cap with an alcohol wipe just before you attach it to the catheter

6) More Catheter Care Tips

- Accidentally pulling or tugging on your catheter or drainage bag may cause a small amount of bleeding. If bright red blood continues, or you experience pain, call your nurse or doctor.
- Drink 6-8 glasses fluid per day unless you have a medical condition that restricts this.
- Keep supplies off of the floor, covered, away from pets and loved ones.
- Never cut your catheter

WHEN TO CALL YOUR NURSE OR DOCTOR

Call right away if you have any of the following:

- Little or no urine flowing into the bag after you check your tubing for kinks
- Urine leaking where the catheter enters the body and there is none in the collection bag
- Pain, burning, or redness of the area where the catheter enters the body
- Bloody urine (a trace of blood can be normal)
- Cloudy or foul – smelling urine, or sand like grains in your urine
- Pain in your lower back or lower abdomen
- Your catheter falls out
- Fever of 100.4 F or higher. or shaking chills

Questions for your Nurse or Doctor: _____

References:

Kozier and Erb 1982. Doughty. Urinary & Fecal Incontinence Current Management Concepts 3rd ed. (2006)
Home Healthcare Nurse Vol.22, no. 12 December 2004: Best Practice for Indwelling Catheter in the Home setting
Lo, Evelyn, Lindsay E. Nicole, Susan E. Coffin, and Carolyn Gould. "Strategies to Prevent Catheter-Associated Urinary Tract Infections in Acute Care Hospitals."
Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology (www.medscape.com), 2014.