

Urinary Catheters

Your Questions Answered.

What is a urinary catheter?

A urinary catheter is a small, soft hollow tube which is inserted into the bladder. It usually goes into the bladder by the same route that urine comes out.

Holes at the top of the tube allow urine to flow through the tube.

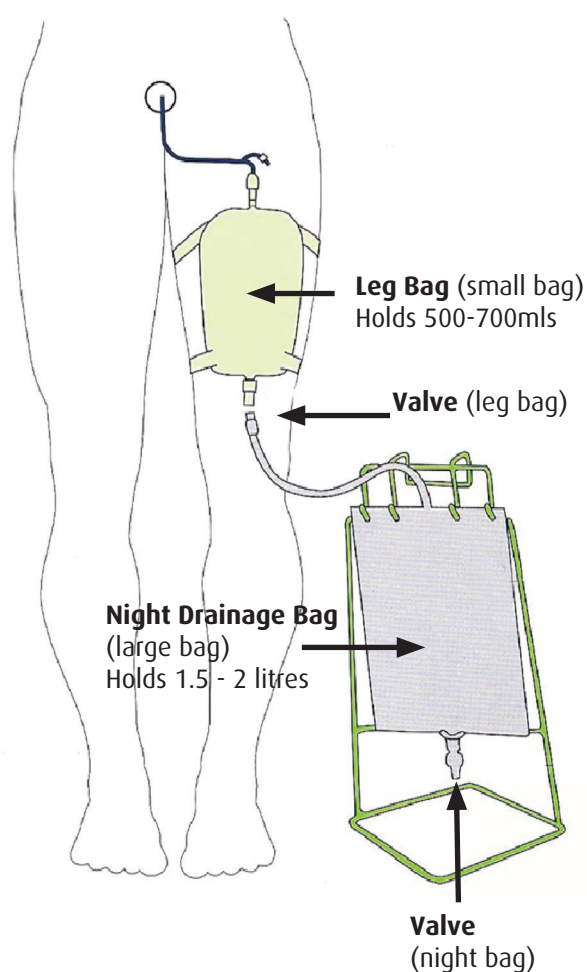
The end of the tube is fitted to a catheter drainage bag which collects the urine. The catheter is held in place in the bladder by a small balloon filled with water.

Why is a urinary catheter needed?

The following are the most common reasons why a urinary catheter is needed:

- There is a blockage in the system from where urine usually flows out.
- There is a risk of urine leaking onto a wound in the buttock area which may delay healing of the wound.
- The bladder is not empty completely when urine is passed.
- It is important to watch closely how much urine is being produced.
- Surgery is planned which is going to last a long time.
- During labour/delivery, when an epidural is used.
- It is necessary to put drugs into the bladder.
- To provide comfort for the very ill patient.

The Link System



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Care of a Urinary Catheter

Personal hygiene is very important to reduce the risk of getting a urinary tract infection.

- Always wash your hands after touching your catheter.
- Wash the area where the catheter enters the body gently with soap and water daily and after you have a bowel motion (if possible have a daily shower/bath).
 - Men should always pull back the foreskin and clean the whole area. When cleaning is finished, it is very important that the foreskin is returned to its normal position.
 - Women should always clean with single strokes from front to back.
- When cleaning the catheter tube always wash away from your body using downward strokes.
- Avoid using talc or perfumed soap which may cause irritation.

What problems may occur?

Infection and catheter blockage can occur.

Signs of infection may include, feeling unwell, a high temperature, change in the smell of the urine, cloudy urine.

Pink/rose coloured urine could be caused by blood as a result of infection or trauma from the catheter being inserted or pulled.

You should call your nurse or doctor if you notice any of the following:

- A high temperature.
- Feeling unwell.
- Pain in your lower abdomen or where the catheter comes out.
- Cloudy, blood stained or offensive smelling urine.
- No urine passed in over four hours.

Care of the drainage bag

The catheter is usually connected to a catheter drainage bag. The bag is either attached to your leg (leg bag) with elasticated/Velcro straps or to a bag which is attached to a catheter stand.

- The bag should be emptied regularly. If overfull it can pull on the bladder and can cause irritation.
- The catheter and bag together should only be disconnected when the bag is being changed, usually once a week.
- A large drainage bag can be connected to a leg bag at night to prevent the leg bag over filling.
- Keep the bag below the level of the bladder to prevent urine flowing back up into the bladder.
- Do not allow the catheter bag or opening port to touch the floor.

Emptying the drainage bag (when approximately 2/3rds full)

1. Wash your hands.
2. Open the tap at the end of the bag and empty into a toilet or a clean container.
3. Wipe the tap clean, and close securely.
4. Flush toilet or empty the container into the toilet and flush.
5. Wash the container with a household detergent and dry well.
6. Wash your hands.



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If you have a problem please contact:

Name:

Phone number:

Name:

Phone number: