

Department of Urology

Bladder Spasms

It is normal to experience feelings of wanting to pass urine naturally when a urinary catheter is in place. Bladder spasms are uncontrolled, sometimes painful contractions of the bladder causing a sudden urge to urinate. This occasionally results in some leakage of urine or bypassing around the catheter.

Bladder spasms occur when the smooth muscle of the bladder contracts and does not allow the bladder to expand as it fills with urine. Possible causes for bladder spasms can be:

- A urinary tract infection (UTI)
- A water filled balloon holding the catheter in place in the bladder
- A catheter that is causing traction (pulling) on the bladder neck because it is not secured correctly.
- A blocked catheter

Prevention and management of bladder spasms

- The best thing to do if you get the feeling that you want to pass urine naturally whilst you have the catheter in place is to relax and let the catheter do the work for you.
- Try not to push the urine out as this will increase the pressure in the abdomen which will then push onto your bladder and cause the catheter to leak.
- Secure the catheter to your leg firmly to prevent pulling and avoid movement and therefore less irritation.
- Assess the catheter for urine flow. There should be no kinks in the tubing as this can cause the catheter not to drain properly and therefore cause leakage



Patient Information

If you find that these bladder spasms are persistent you should contact your GP or District Nurse for further assistance.

It may be possible to reduce the volume of water in the balloon that is holding the catheter in place as sometimes the inflated balloon can act as an irritant to the bladder or bladder neck.

There is also medication available that can help to calm the bladder down to relieve the symptoms.

If you are unsure please contact Debbie Shreeve Advanced Nurse Practitioner in Urology on 024 7696 5373 for further information and advice.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 5149 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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