

Urology

How to look after your Urinary Catheter whilst in hospital

Your doctor or nurse has explained to you that you have a urinary catheter. This may be a long term solution to your urinary problems or a short term measure for a certain period of time following which you will have the catheter removed.

What is a urinary catheter?

An internal urinary catheter is a thin supple tube that drains urine directly from your bladder so that you will not need to use the toilet. The urinary catheter is held in place by a tiny water filled balloon to prevent the catheter from falling out or from being in the wrong place. During the day you may connect the urinary catheter to a leg bag that will allow you to walk around more freely and give you greater dignity or use a larger two litre capacity bag attached to a catheter stand provided by the nursing staff.

Leg bags

The leg drainage bag connects to your urinary catheter and can be attached to your lower leg or thigh by a pair of elastic straps (the nursing staff on the ward will show you how to do this). When adjusting the leg bag straps it is important not to obstruct the flow of urine through the tubing or to have them too tight that they impair your circulation. When emptying the leg bag you must always make sure that you have washed your hands first. Whilst in hospital you must empty the urine from the bag directly into a clean container as the nursing staff may need to record your urine output. Once you are comfortably positioned, open the drainage tap (this may be a slide action tap or a lever). Do not touch the drainage port with the container or toilet seat. Remember to close the tap once the leg bag is



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empty and then wash your hands. Empty the leg bag when it is full or when it becomes heavy.

Getting ready for bed

If not already using a two litre capacity bag, this can be attached to the leg bag, allowing for an undisturbed nights sleep and continuous urine drainage.

To do this:

- Loosen or remove all straps that are used to secure the leg bag.
- Connect the tubing of the night drainage bag to the drainage port of the leg bag and open the leg bag drainage tap.
- Place the night drainage bag at the foot or the side of the bed, remembering to keep it below the level of your bladder.
- In the morning simply close the leg bag tap and adjust the straps once again around your leg.
- Remove the night drainage bag and dispose of this in an appropriate Cliniwaste (yellow) disposal bin.

It is recommended that the leg bag and night drainage bag (if appropriate) is changed on a weekly basis, writing the date that this is done on the bag in the space provided. To do this:

- Wash and dry your hands thoroughly and empty the drainage bag.
- Clamp the urinary catheter closed by squeezing or pinching.
- Using a twisting and pulling motion disconnect the drainage bag tubing from the urinary catheter and connect the new leg bag.
- Dispose of the used drainage bag in the Cliniwaste (yellow) disposal bin as before.

General advice

- When dealing with your urinary catheter always remember to wash and dry your hands before and after.
- Make sure the bag drainage tap is off the floor
- Always bath, shower or wash the genital area around your urinary catheter daily
- Drink plenty of fluids to flush out your system.

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- Eat a well balanced diet - constipation can sometimes place extra pressure on your bladder and cause some urine to leak.

Potential problems

Occasionally some urine may leak around the sides of the urinary catheter. This could be because the catheter is blocked or you are having bladder spasms. Check that the catheter tubing is not kinked and that there is urine draining into the bag. If problems continue or you develop any of the following symptoms please inform a member of the nursing or medical team:

- Strong smelling cloudy looking urine
- Fever / temperature
- Swelling around the catheter
- Bleeding around the catheter
- Blood in your urine
- No urine drainage

If you have any further questions about caring for your urinary catheter please ask any member of the ward nursing staff.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact a member of the Ward staff and they will do their best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

To give feedback on this leaflet please email feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk

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