

## Urology

# Looking after your urinary catheter in hospital

Your doctor or nurse has explained that you have a urinary catheter. This may be a long-term solution for your urinary problems or a short-term measure, after which the catheter will be removed.

### About urinary catheter

An internal urinary catheter is a thin, flexible tube that drains urine directly from your bladder, so you do not need to use the toilet.

The catheter is held in place by a small water-filled balloon to prevent it from falling out or moving.

During the day, you may use a leg bag to allow you to walk around more freely, or a larger two-litre bag attached to a catheter stand provided by the nursing staff.

### Leg bags

The leg bag connects to your urinary catheter and is worn on your lower leg or thigh with elastic straps. Nursing staff will show you how to attach it safely.

#### When adjusting the straps:

- Do not obstruct urine flow
- Do not make them too tight, as this can affect circulation



## Patient Information

### **When emptying the leg bag:**

- Wash your hands thoroughly
- Empty the urine into a clean container (nursing staff may record the amount)
- Once you are comfortably, open the drainage tap (slide or lever action)
- Do not touch the drainage port with the container or toilet seat
- Close the tap once the bag is empty
- Wash your hands again
- Empty the leg bag when it is full or heavy

### **Using a night drainage bag**

If you are not already using a two-litre night bag, this can be attached to the leg bag to allow undisturbed sleep and continuous urine drainage.

#### **To attach the night bag:**

- Loosen or remove all straps securing the leg bag
- Connect the night bag tubing to the drainage port of the leg bag and open the leg bag tap
- Place the night bag at the foot or side of the bed, below bladder level
- In the morning, close the leg bag tap and readjust the straps around your leg
- Remove the night bag and dispose of it in a Cliniwaste (yellow) bin

### **Changing leg and night drainage bags**

It is recommended to change the leg bag and night drainage bag weekly. Write the date on the bag in the space provided.

#### **To change the bag:**

- Wash and dry your hands thoroughly and empty the drainage bag
- Clamp the urinary catheter by squeezing or pinching
- Twist and pull to disconnect the old bag, then connect the new one
- Dispose of the used drainage bag in a Cliniwaste (yellow) bin

### **General advice**

- Always wash and dry your hands before and after handling your catheter
- Keep the bag drainage tap off the floor
- Wash the genital area around your catheter daily, either in the bath or shower
- Drink plenty of fluids to help flush out your system.
- Eat a well-balanced diet - constipation can put extra pressure on your bladder and may cause urine leakage.

### **Potential problems**

Sometimes urine may leak around the 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.

### **Contact a nurse or doctor if you notice any of the following:**

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

If you have any more 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.

## Patient Information

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#### Document History

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