

Care of your catheter

How to look after your catheter and yourself

- Drink plenty of fluids (unless restricted on medical advice)
- Practice good hygiene
- Maintain steady urine flow
- Maintain a closed drainage system
- AVOID CONSTIPATION

Drink plenty of fluids

We recommend you drink between 1½ – 2 litres (3 - 4 pints) of fluid a day, **unless restricted on medical advice.**

Practice good hygiene

Always wash and dry your hands before handling the catheter bag.

Wash around the catheter area daily with mild soap and water; men should wash under the foreskin.

Do not use oil based creams or talc around the catheter area.

Maintain a steady urine flow

Ensure your tubing is not kinked or clamped.

Position your catheter bag below the level of your bladder and not in contact with the floor.

Empty your catheter bag every 3 - 4 hours, or when full.

Maintain a closed drainage system

Do not detach your catheter bag unnecessarily.

Leg bags/valves are changed every seven days.

A single-use night bag should be used and disposed of daily.

If you are permanently in bed, a seven-day night bag should be used instead of a leg bag.

AVOID CONSTIPATION

Common problems with your catheter

Bladder spasms

Bladder spasms feel like abdominal cramp and are quite common when you have a catheter in your bladder. The pain is caused by the bladder trying to squeeze out the balloon. If you are unable to tolerate this sensation arrange to see your GP who may prescribe a drug to help.

Leakage around the catheter

This is called by-passing. It is sometimes the result of bladder spasms or can take place when you open your bowels. Check your urine is still draining into the bag **IF IT IS NOT** contact your Community Nurse.

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Blood/Cloudy/Concentrated or Debris in urine

This is common, increase your fluids. Contact your Community Nurse if it does not clear

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Blockage

Contact your Community Nurse if no urine is draining into catheter bag, your abdomen is swollen or you are in pain.

Your catheter falls out

Supra-pubic catheter - *Please go to A&E urgently.*

Urethral catheter - Contact your Community Nurse as your catheter needs to be replaced and you will be seen as soon as possible. This is not urgent unless you are unable to pass urine and you are in pain.

Urine Infection

Signs are an unpleasant odour, a temperature and feeling unwell.

Please take a urine specimen to your GP for testing or contact a Community Nurse if you are housebound.

Some useful facts

- **Your catheter will be changed routinely every 12 weeks.**
- It is important that your catheter is secured to your lower leg and thigh with straps or aqua sleeve. Alternate position at each bag change and monitor your skin condition.
- A flip-flow valve may be in use and will be explained prior to insertion (this will be instead of catheter bags).
- Your catheter supplies will be on prescription from your GP – **always keep a spare catheter.**
- Dispose of empty, used catheter bags in your usual waste disposal – bags are not recyclable.
- Night stands should be used and can be obtained through your Community Nurse/Continence Advisor.

Remember to ask if you are unsure of anything.

Your community nursing team

Telephone

If you require this information in a different format or language, please contact the Equality and Diversity Department on 024 7653 6802