

- If your catheter leaks its is not serious but tell your district nurse or GP when you see them.
- If your catheter falls out, but you pass urine normally, call your district nurse during office hours. If you cannot pass urine in the normal way and your bladder becomes painful, call your GP or district nurse immediately.
- You may see blood in your urine; this may or may not be normal. Mention it to your district nurse when you next see them. However, if bleeding is heavy, report it at once to your GP.
- If you have fever or pain in your lower tummy area, contact your GP who will check you to see if you have an infection.

If you have any other worries or questions about your catheter, please feel free to talk to your district nurse or GP.

Further information

NHS Website

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Urinary-catheterization/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

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This document can be made available in other languages and large print upon request.

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Looking after your urinary catheter

Information for patients

This leaflet gives advice on caring for your urinary catheter when you leave hospital.

What is a urinary catheter?

A catheter is a hollow tube which drains urine from your bladder into a bag. Having a catheter means you will not need to pass water in the usual way.

How to look after yourself and your catheter

- **Keep clean:** Using unperfumed soap and warm water, wash the area where the catheter goes into your body. This should be done daily. Dry the area using a soft towel. It may be possible for you to take a bath or shower but ask the nurse if this is okay. Avoid using talcum powder or scented toiletries around the area. Also wash thoroughly after a bowel movement.
- **Drink plenty:** Drink at least two litres of fluid every day. This is around one cupful every hour you are awake. The drinks do not have to be water but can be any hot or cold drink.
- **Use the right bag:** Wear the leg bag when you are up and about and connect the night bag to the bottom of the leg bag

when you go to bed. Try to wear the bag on different legs on alternate days. Always wash your hands thoroughly before and after changing the bags.

- Alternatively, you may be discharged with a **catheter valve**, which is like a tap device that fits into the end of your catheter. This 'tap' would need to be opened up to empty urine (into the toilet) every four hours during the day and can be connected to a night bag at night.
- **Empty your bag:** It is important to empty the bag/valve before it becomes too full. To empty your bag/valve, open the tap over the toilet. Remember to close it afterwards. Each bag/valve will last about one week. Once it has been disconnected, the bag/valve should be disposed of safely in the dustbin and replaced with a new one.

Other useful instructions

- Whenever possible, take regular daily exercise.
- Try to avoid getting constipated as this can stop the catheter draining properly.
- Avoid bending or kinking the catheter tube. Always keep the bag below the level of your bladder to maintain drainage.

How do I get replacement bags?

You will be supplied with a home pack which has leg bags, night bags and a user guide. You will be referred to the home delivery service for more supplies. Your GP will be informed that you have been sent home with a catheter.

Some common problems

- Bladder spasms or cramps in the lower tummy area are common when you have a new catheter. They are nothing to worry about and will usually disappear after a few days. If this continues, please make an appointment to see your GP, who can prescribe you medication to ease the discomfort.
- If no urine is draining into the bag several hours after the bag is connected, there are several things to check:
 - Is the tube bent or kinked?
 - Is the bag below bladder level?
 - Is the bag connected properly?
 - Have you been drinking enough?
 - Are you constipated?

Try moving or walking around as this may dislodge a blockage in the tube. If no urine has drained after four hours, call your GP.