

## Urinary Catheter Care - Urethral & Suprapubic Catheter

### What is a catheter?

A catheter is a small tube made out of latex or silicone which stays in the bladder and allows urine to drain out. The catheter has a balloon at the end, which is filled with fluid and stops the catheter falling out. The catheter is changed every three months.

### What types of catheters are there?

The catheter could be inserted through your urethra (waterpipe); this is called a **urethral catheter**. Sometimes, it could be inserted through lower part of your abdomen; this is called a **suprapubic catheter**.

Suprapubic catheters are often easier to change, have lesser chance of getting blocked and damaging the waterpipe and allow you to engage in sexual intercourse, but they do require a operation to insert.

### How do I care for my catheter at home?

The aim of caring for your catheter is to maximise comfort and reduce chance of infection. Important points to follow are:

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water before handling the catheter
- Keep your genital area clean and dry at all times
- Do not clean the catheter with soap or chemicals - just warm water is sufficient
- Drink plenty of liquids to reduce risk of debris / stones
- Avoid getting constipated and straining to open bowels which may cause leakage around the catheter
- Don't pull, tug or remove the catheter - it may cause bleeding and trauma to the urethra
- Always keep your urine bag below the level of the waist to prevent backflow of urine into the bladder, which increases chance of infection
- Reduce the amount of times the catheter is open to air (during bag changes) to reduce chance of infection
- Avoid sexual intercourse if you have a urethral catheter (but this is possible if you have a suprapubic catheter)
- Wear comfortable cotton underwear
- If there is leakage around the catheter, wear pads to prevent moisture build-up and if the leakage is heavy call your urologist for advice

### How do I use a leg bag?

During the day, it is more convenient to wear a leg bag to drain your urine. You should empty your leg bag every three to four hours or sooner if it is more than half full.

#### To empty the leg bag:

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Stand or sit near a toilet
- Loosen the lower strap so that the bag hangs over the toilet.
- Open the clamp being careful that the drain port does not come into contact with your fingers or the toilet.
- Drain the urine until the bag is empty and then close the clamp.
- Tighten the lower strap so the leg bag is attached to your leg
- Wash your hands with soap and water

## How do I use a night drainage bag?

During the night it is best to use the night drainage bag which holds more urine to avoid you having to wake up to empty the bag. Leave some slack in the tube so the catheter will not be pulled when you move your leg. Keep the urine collection bag below the level of your bladder.

### To attach the night bag:

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Stand or sit near a toilet
- Remove the cap at the end of the night bag's tubing (keep it safe for reuse).
- Attach the night bag port to the end of the day bag - Close the clamp at the end of the night bag and open the clamp to the day bag.
- Remove the straps holding the day bag in place.

### To empty / change the night drainage bag

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Stand or sit near a toilet.
- Open the clamp at the end of the bag.
- Do not touch the drain port with your fingers or let the drain port touch the toilet seat.
- Drain the urine out of the night bag until empty.
- Close the clamp at the end of the night bag and close the clamp at the end of the day bag.
- Remove the night bag and replace the cap.
- Wash your hands with soap and water again.

After emptying the night bag and disconnecting it ready for the daytime it will need to be cleaned with warm soapy water and stored in a clean, dry place.

## What problems can arise with my urinary catheter and how can I fix them?

If your catheter is not draining urine

- Straighten any twists, bends or external pressure on the tubing
- Ensure the urine bag is below the level of your waist
- If it is still not draining contact your urologist or go to the nearest emergency department

If the tip of my penis gets sore

- Ensure the tubing is not to excessive stretch due to the bag dragging the catheter
- Apply some water-based lubricant like K-Y jelly to keep the catheter from sticking

Bladder spasms

- These feel like sudden cramps in your abdomen or rectum and can be quite uncomfortable and urine may leak around the catheter
- Oxybutynin or Soliofenacin tablets can help spasms

Blood in the urine

- Drink plenty of fluids to flush out the blood and any tiny clots
- If there are large clots or the catheter is blocked contact your urologist or go to the nearest emergency department

- Foul smelling drainage around the catheter or you have fevers/feel unwell
- Contact your urologist or go to the nearest emergency department

Catheter falls out

- Contact your urologist or go to the nearest emergency department

Recurrent infections / Bladder Stones

- Your urologist will advise you with a plan to treat and prevent these in the future



Figure 1: Urine Leg Bag.



Figure 2: Urine Night Bag.