

You and Your Catheter

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Your catheter

Your doctor will have explained why you have a catheter in place.

It may be due to:

- Management of urinary incontinence
- Inability to pass urine
- To allow healing after surgery
- To prevent kidney stones
- To allow bladder function tests

Any urine left in the bladder can cause urinary tract infections, discomfort or damage to the bladder and kidneys which is why a catheter is necessary.

A catheter is a fine hollow tube placed in your bladder to drain your urine into a bag. You will not need to pass urine yourself.

The catheter is held in place by a balloon filled with water after insertion and sits in the base of the bladder. The catheter will not fall out in normal use.

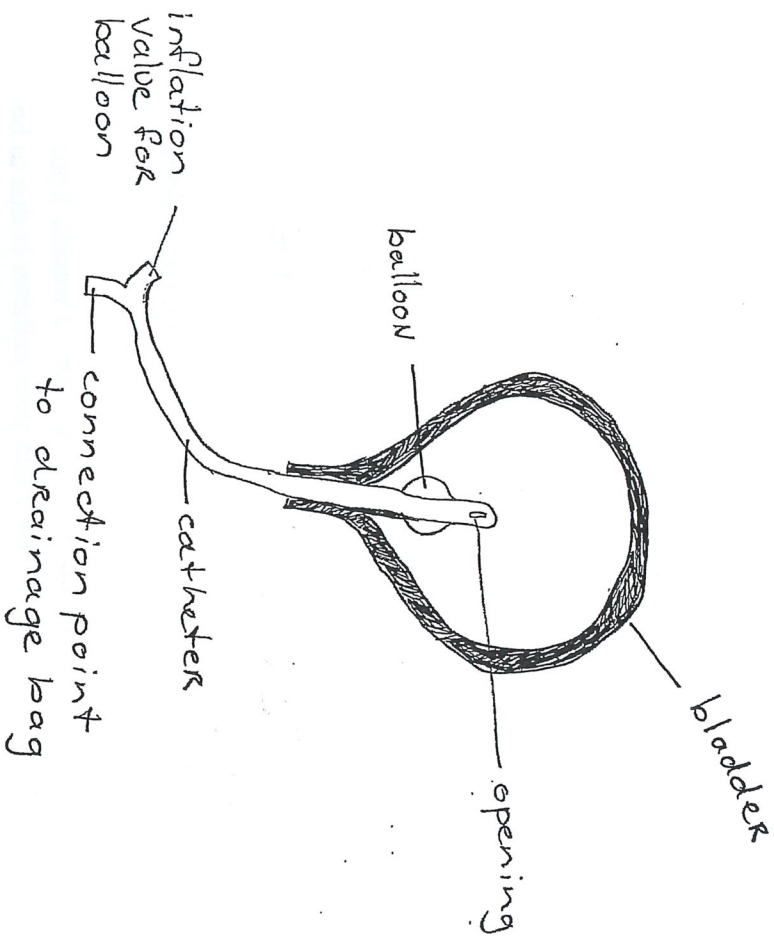
Follow up care

The nurse at the 24 Hour Surgery will refer you onto district nursing for catheter care.

If you do not receive a phone call and/or a visit from district nursing the next working day after you had your catheter inserted, contact the 24 Hour Surgery at 3657777.

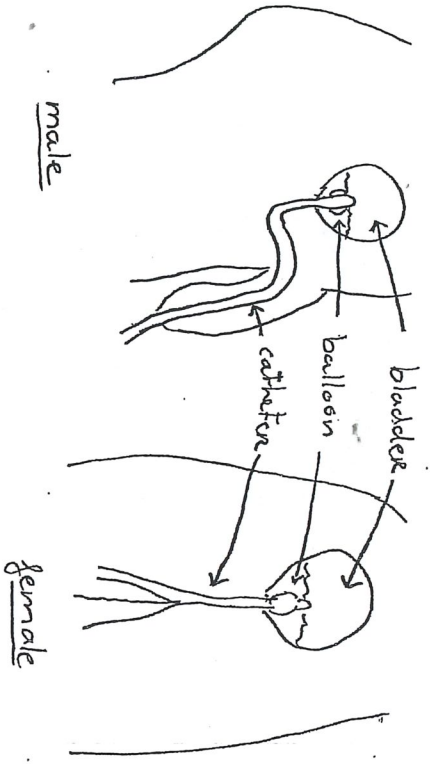
The doctor at the 24 Hour Surgery might also refer you onto Urology Outpatients for further investigations. They will contact you with an appointment date and time.

Notes



Never try to remove the catheter without medical or nursing advice, you may hurt yourself.

Notes



The catheter is attached to a drainage bag. Urine drains directly into the bag.

Most catheters can be left in place for 12 weeks. Your doctor/nurse will tell you when your catheter is due to be changed.

A catheter valve may be recommended by your doctor/nurse. This replaces a drainage bag and needs to be opened 3-4 hourly. A night-bag can be attached to the valve for sleep time. The valve is changed every 7-14 days.

When having sexual intercourse

Both partners should wash their private parts before and after intercourse.

Women can tape the catheter forward onto her abdomen, out of the way.

Men fold the catheter tubing down over the erect penis and apply a condom and tape it in place.

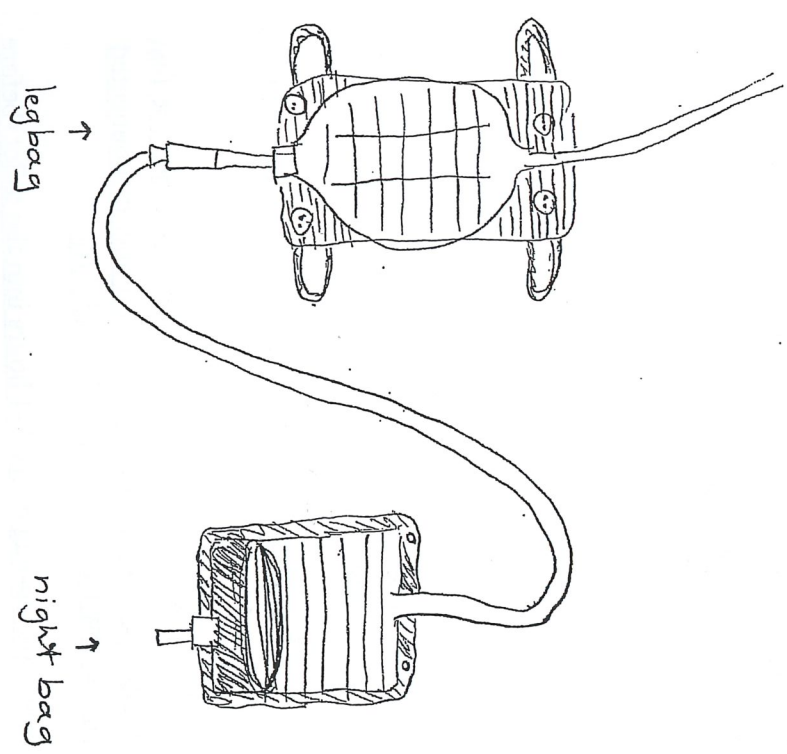
Use plenty of water soluble lubricant eg KY Jelly, not vaseline.

Very rough intercourse should be avoided and it may be necessary to find a new position which makes it comfortable for the partner with the catheter.

If your catheter is causing you problems during sexual intercourse do not hesitate to discuss this with your nurse or doctor.

There are two types of drainage bags:

Leg Bags and Night Bags.



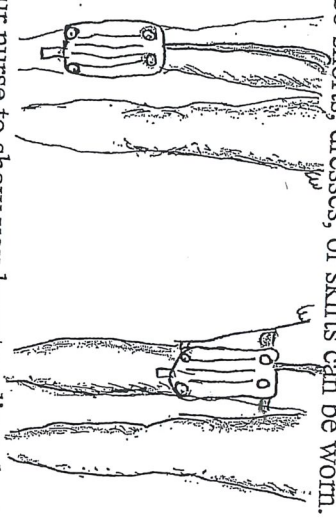
Always wash your hands before and after touching your catheter and drainage bags.

You are currently entitled to 2 leg bags and 4 night bags per month which are currently free of charge.

LEG-BAGS (also known as day bags)

The leg-bag (day bag) has slits which allows straps to pass through so you can strap the bag to your leg.

The bag can be worn on your calf or adapted to your thigh, so shorts, dresses, or skirts can be worn.



Get your nurse to show you how to adjust the tubing to suit your needs.

You can buy special net stoking which can further secure the leg bag to your leg.

This leg-bag is to be worn at all times from the time that you are discharged from hospital and only disconnected when a new bag is to be fitted fortnightly.

Empty the leg-bag every 3-4 hours into the toilet (before it is overfull), using the drainage tap at the bottom of the bag.

Always keep the drainage bag lower than the bladder to prevent infection.

Problem Solving – continued

Bleeding

Cause: irritation of bladder or urethra by the catheter or infection (as above).

Signs: blood in the urine or around the catheter.

Treatment:

- Increase your fluid intake
- If the bleeding persists or is still heavy after two days contact your GP
- Contact your GP who may take a urine sample and prescribe a course of antibiotics.

Catheter falling out

Cause: faulty balloon or damaged catheter

Treatment:

- If you can pass urine freely without the catheter, call your nurse in office hours.
- If you cannot pass urine and the bladder becomes painful, seek immediate help from your GP or an after hours medical centre.

Problem Solving-continued

Bladder spasm and/or Leakage around your catheter

Cause:

The bladder attempts to expel the catheter by creating pressure. This forces urine out around the catheter causing pain and leakage.

Signs:

- 1) lower abdominal pain,
- 2) leakage of urine,
- 3) decreased urine in the catheter bag.

Treatment

- Take regular 4-hourly panadol while pain is present.
- The doctor can prescribe a medication called Oxybutynin, which is an anti-spasmodic. Make enquiries to your doctor about this.
- If pain persists, contact your doctor or nurse.

NIGHT-BAGS (replaced weekly)

This has a larger urine capacity than the leg bag.

The length of the tubing is longer to allow greater movement when in bed.

To fit the night-bag

Remove the coloured cap first from the fluted end of the night-bag.

Connect the fluted top of the night bag into the bottom outlet of the leg-bag.

Open the outlet tap on the leg-bag to ensure the urine can run freely through into the night-bag.

When in bed, the night-bag must be lower than your bed to aid drainage.

Place the night-bag into a container, e.g. ice cream container to hold possible leakage.

In the morning

Close the leg-bag bottom outlet and detach the night-bag. Empty the urine in the bag into the toilet. Wash out the night-bag with warm soapy water and hang up to dry. Once dried, store in a clean sealed plastic bag.

Use the same day every week to change the bags.

To replace the Leg-Bag

Replaced every two weeks.

Wash and dry your hands. Place a towel on your lap between you and the catheter, with your replacement bag beside you.

Avoid touching the ends of any connecting tubing.

Pinch off the catheter using the thumb and fore finger. (fig. 1)

Withdraw the leg bag tubing from the catheter. (fig. 2)

Remove the protective cap from new bag and immediately insert tube into the catheter. (fig. 3)

Dispose of the old bag. Wash and dry your hands.

Also change the leg bag when it has become disconnected and the inlet-end has become contaminated.

Problem Solving--continued

No Urine In The Bag For Several Hours

Cause:

- 1) the tubing is kinked or bent.
- 2) the bag is above bladder level.
- 3) you have not been drinking enough.
- 4) constipation.
- 5) blocked catheter due to debris

Treatment

- Check the placement of your catheter tubing and drainage bag.
- Try moving or walking around. This may dislodge a blockage.
- If 4 hours or longer pass and no urine has drained then contact your doctor or nurse or an after hours medical centre..
- Contact your district nurse or GP who will attempt to clear the blockage. If unsuccessful the catheter will be removed and replaced.

Problem Solving

For most people managing a catheter at home is straight forward and free from complication. However, there are some minor problems which may arise. Below is a list of them.

Urinary Infection

Cause: bacterial contamination

Signs: smelly cloudy urine, abdominal pain, bleeding.

Treatment:

- Increase your fluid intake.
- Contact your GP who may take a urine sample and prescribe a course of antibiotics.
- Catheter must be changed 24 hours after commencing antibiotics.
- Try taking one glass of cranberry juice/day as a preventative measure.

It is important to seek treatment if you experience fever, loinpain, significant blood in your urine and unexplained sudden onset of confusion.

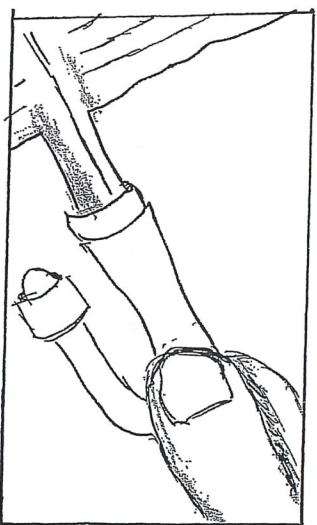


fig. 1

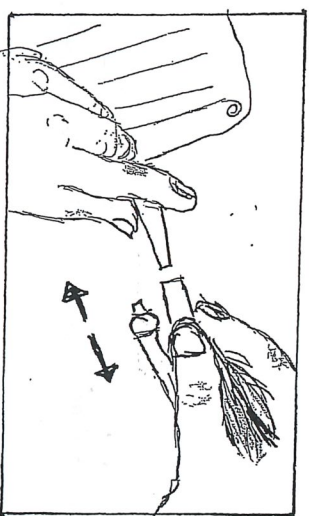


fig. 2

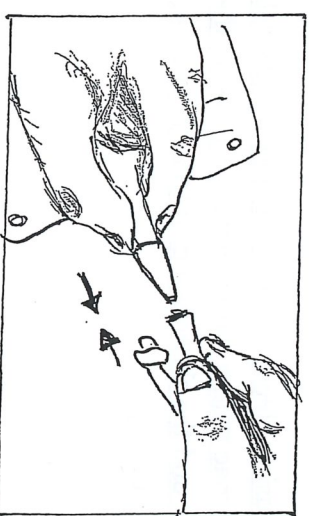


fig 3

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How to keep your catheter working properly

Drink at least 8 glasses/cups of fluid in a 24 hour period.

Where possible, take regular exercise.

Avoid constipation, as this can affect catheter drainage.

If constipation is a problem ask your nurse for help or advice.

Avoid kinking or bending the catheter tubing and always keep the drainage bag below the level of your bladder.

When using electrical blankets, place a drawsheet (or plastic mac with a fabric backing) between the electric blanket and the sheet as a preventative measure if leakage occurs.

Personal Hygiene

Always wash your hands before and after touching your catheter or drainage bags.

Shower or bath daily. Showering is preferable to bathing, leave the leg-bag in place and towel-dry it afterwards.

Wash the area around your bladder outlet and catheter daily. Women should wash from front to back.

Uncircumcised men should pull their foreskin back up over the tip of the penis after washing.

Use unscented soap and warm water, rinse well to avoid irritation.

Dry the area well with a soft towel.

Avoid using talcum powder or any creams around this area, unless prescribed by your doctor.

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