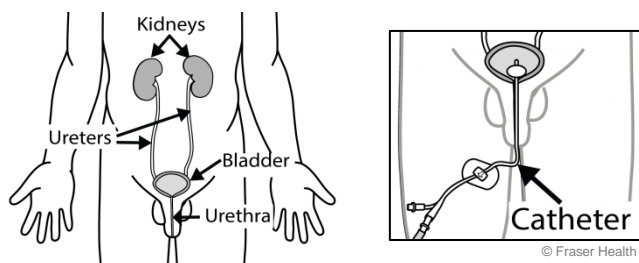


Caring for Your Urinary Catheter at Home

You have a urinary catheter. It drains urine from your bladder into a bag through a tube. A small, water-filled balloon at the end of the tube holds it inside your bladder. The tube is connected to a bag for the urine to drain into.



Having a urinary catheter can put you at risk of getting an infection. It is important to read and understand this information so you can lessen the chances of getting an infection.

When should the urinary catheter be changed?

Your urinary catheter needs to be changed on a regular basis. Your family practitioner (family doctor or nurse practitioner) and your home care nurse let you know when the catheter needs to be changed.

When should the urinary bag be changed?

The urinary bag (drainage bag) should be changed when the catheter is changed.

The bag should also be changed when:

- The bag smells.
- The bag is discoloured.
- The bag leaks.

To learn how to care for your bag, read 'Caring for your Urinary Bag at Home'.

Caring for Yourself

- Always wash your hands with soap and water **before and after** touching the urinary catheter and bag.
- Drink 2 to 3 litres of fluids each day (People with heart or kidney problems should check with their family practitioner about the correct amount of fluid to drink each day).

For Women

- Wash the area where the catheter enters your body and between your legs with soap and water **every night** (or morning if you shower at night), **and after every bowel movement** (poop).
- Always clean from the front of where the catheter enters your body to the back.
- Rinse the soap off with a damp cloth and dry with a clean towel.

For Men

- Wash your penis carefully with soap and water **every night** (or morning if you shower at night), **and after every bowel movement** (poop).
- If not circumcised, pull back and clean under the foreskin.
- Always clean from the front of where the catheter enters your body to the back.
- Rinse the soap off with a damp cloth and dry with a clean towel.

Caring for Your Urinary Catheter at Home - *continued*

Supplies you need at home

You can buy urinary catheter supplies from a medical supply store or local pharmacy. Ask your home care nurse or family practitioner for locations in your area.

Some insurance plans might cover the cost of your supplies so it is important to check with them.

Make sure you have the following supplies in your home:

- ☐ a new urinary catheter (same size and type that you are currently using)
 - ☐ a new urinary drainage bag with an 'anti-reflux' valve
 - ☐ alcohol swabs or wipes
 - ☐ a clean container to empty the urine into
 - ☐ a device to secure the catheter or medical tape
 - ☐ clean scissors (for leg bag only)
 - ☐ a funnel or 60mL syringe
 - ☐ vinegar
 - ☐ a clean measuring cup
- for 2 bag system only

When to get help

Call your home care nurse or family practitioner if you notice **any** of the following.

- Urine is leaking from around the catheter.
- There is very little or no urine in the catheter bag for the last 4 hours and your bladder feels full.
- Urine has a foul smell or changes in colour.
- You generally feel unwell or tired.
- You have chills or a fever over 37.8 °C.
- You have new pain in your bladder area and/or in your back (below your ribs).
- The area where the catheter enters your body is red, swollen, or tender.
- You have changes in the way you think **and** this is new for you.
- You live with a spinal cord injury, and notice **any** of the following:
 - one or more of the signs listed above
 - more muscle spasms than usual
 - a headache
 - feeling sick to your stomach
 - feeling tired even after sleeping

If you cannot contact your home care nurse and/or family practitioner:

- Call **8-1-1** (HealthLinkBC) to speak to a registered nurse, or
- Go to your nearest Emergency Department.

If you often have problems with your catheter or catheterizing yourself, talk with your home care nurse or family practitioner. You might need to see a bladder doctor (urologist) or other health provider.

HealthLinkBC

www.healthlinkbc.ca
8-1-1 or 7-1-1 (TTY)

Call any time you have any health questions or concerns. HealthLinkBC is open 24 hours.

Available in 130 languages. For an interpreter, say your language in English. Wait until an interpreter comes on the phone.