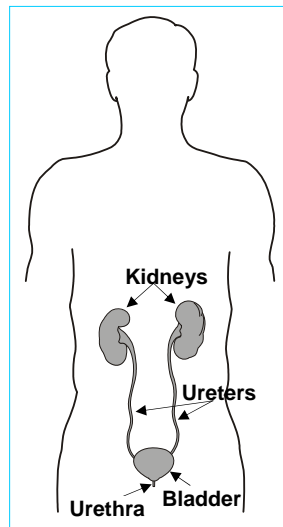


Emergency Services

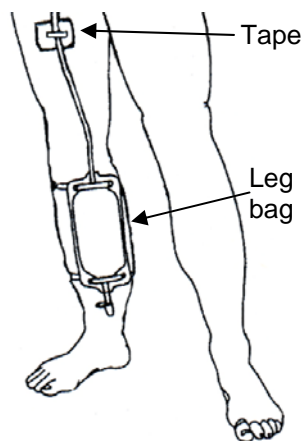
Urinary Catheter Care

A urinary catheter is a germ-free (or sterile) tube that goes through your urethra into your bladder. Your urinary catheter allows for urine drainage from your bladder. A small balloon on one end of the tube holds it inside your bladder.

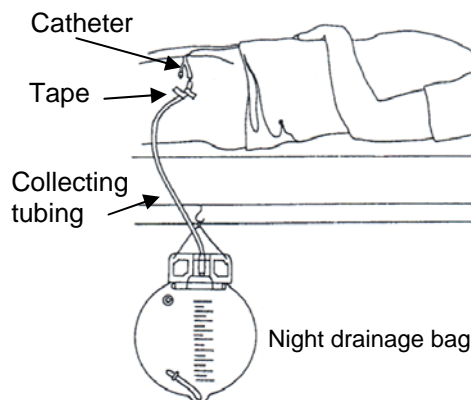
Your catheter is connected to collecting tubing. This leads to a drainage bag.



During the day, you may use a leg bag. It straps around your calf, as shown in the picture. This lets you move around more easily.



At night, you will connect the catheter to a larger drainage bag called a night bag.



We have arranged for you to see an urologist (a doctor who specializes in urine problems).

Doctor: _____

Appointment: _____

Go to the nearest Emergency Department if:

- There is very little or no urine flowing into the drainage bag for 4 or more hours and you feel like your bladder is full.
- Your urine has changed colour or looks cloudy.
- Your urine looks bloody or has large blood clots.
- Your urine smells really bad.
- The area around where the catheter enters your body is red, swollen, or tender.
- You have pus draining from around the catheter where it enters your body.
- Urine is leaking around the catheter where it enters your body
- You feel sick to your stomach (nauseated) or are throwing up (vomiting).
- You have chills or a fever over 38.5°C (101.3°F).

To learn more, it's good to ask:

- Your family doctor
- Your urologist
- HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf and hard of hearing) or go online at www.HealthLinkBC.ca

Urinary Catheter Care - *continued*

How to take care of your catheter

Always wash your hands with soap and water before **and** after handling the catheter, tubing, or bags.

Always wipe from front to back after having a bowel movement (going poo).

At least once a day, wash the area between your legs and around the catheter with soap and water. Always wash from front to back.

Do not pull or tug on the catheter. Make sure the catheter is not stretched, that the drainage bag is not dragging or pulling on the catheter. This can damage the tissue.

Always secure the catheter tube to your thigh with tape to prevent pulling.


Check to make sure there are no kinks in any of the collecting tubing. Kinks in the tubing prevent the flow of urine out of your bladder.

Always keep the drainage bag below the level of your bladder so the urine drains properly.




Always keep the drainage bag off the floor. To prevent contact with the floor and in case your night bag leaks, place the night bag in a clean plastic pail.

Drink 8 to 10 cups (2 to 2.5 litres) of fluid each day (unless your doctor tells you differently). Water is one of the best fluid choices, but other fluids can include milk, juice, soup, and small amounts of coffee and tea.


Washing is the most important step in preventing the spread of infection.

This symbol  reminds you to wash your hands.




To empty the drainage bag

-  Open the stopper.
-  Drain out all the urine into the toilet.
 - Do not touch the end of the drain opening. If you accidentally touch the opening, clean it with an alcohol swab.
-  Close the stopper.

Leg bag

- Always use the straps to secure the leg bag to your leg.
-  Empty the leg bag every three to four hours, or when it gets half full.

Night drainage bag

- Gather your supplies : night bag, tape, alcohol swabs
-  Empty your leg bag.
 - Disconnect the leg bag from the catheter and set it aside.
 - Remove the protective cap on the collecting tubing of the night bag. Keep this cap to attach to the leg bag.
 - Without touching the open ends of the catheter or collecting tubing, attach the tubing for the night bag.
 - Tape the tubing to the leg closest to the side of the bed. Hang the night bag from a belt or the belt of your housecoat until you are ready to go to bed.
-  Clean the leg bag.
 - In the morning, empty the night bag and follow the steps to connect to the leg bag.
-  Clean the night bag.

Urinary Catheter Care - *continued*

Cleaning the drainage bags



Empty the bag.

- Clean the bag after disconnecting it. A great place to clean the bag is in the bathtub.
- Flush the tubing and bag with soapy water. Rinse the bag with water and drain.
- Using a small funnel, pour ¼ cup (50 mL) of white vinegar and 1 cup (250 mL) of water through the tubing into the bag.
- Shake the bag gently.
- Drain the bag completely.
- Lay the bag on a clean towel to air dry.
- Wipe the connection with an alcohol swab.



Cover the end with a clean protective cap.

You can get alcohol swabs at the pharmacy.
You can get replacement bags at medical supply stores and some pharmacies.

What the words mean

Kidneys (sounds like kid-nee) – These bean-shaped organs take waste out of the blood and make urine.

Ureters (sounds like yer-et-ers) - These two small tubes carry urine from the kidneys to the bladder.

Bladder (sounds like blah-der) – This hollow organ collects and holds urine until it can move out of the body.

Urethra (sounds like yer-ee-thra) - The small short tube that carries the urine from the bladder out of the body.

Urine (sounds like yer-in) - The waste fluid made by the kidneys, commonly called 'pee'.

Urinate (sounds like yer-in-ate) – The action of moving urine out of the body, commonly called 'going to the toilet' or 'going pee'.

Images used with permission from 'Kidney Infection – Going Home' (July 2010) by Providence Health Care and 'Going Home with a Urinary Catheter' (August 2011) by Vancouver Coastal Health.