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# Urinary Catheter Passport

Looking After Your Urinary Catheter and  
Catheter Change Record

United Lincolnshire Hospitals Trust



## **Introduction**

The purpose of this part of the passport is to give you advice on looking after your urinary catheter. If you have a catheter appointment at your GP surgery, clinic or hospital, or are going into hospital, you should take this passport with you.

The first half of this passport will be completed by nursing staff to ensure the continuity of your care.

## **What is a urinary catheter?**

A catheter is a flexible hollow tube used to drain urine from the bladder. The catheter is inserted into the urethra (the opening of which is situated at the tip of the penis or just above the vagina) or through a hole made in the abdomen (suprapubic catheter). The catheter is then guided into the bladder, allowing urine to flow through it and into a drainage bag which will be attached to your leg. Some people may have a valve at the end of the catheter instead of a drainage bag.

## **Why have I got a catheter?**

The most common reason to have a catheter at home is because you are unable to pass urine normally. If you have not been told why you have a catheter, please ask.

## **What should I do if I have pain and discomfort?**

Your catheter may be uncomfortable at times, particularly after it is inserted. The bladder may also spasm causing discomfort. If the discomfort becomes pain, please discuss with your community nurse.

Adapted from work by Michelle Pickering, Continence Specialist Practitioner Hambleton and Richmondshire Locality Continence Advisory Service and the Community Infection Prevention and Control Nursing Service, NHS North Yorkshire and York

**If you experience any problems with the catheter or need further advice please contact your district nurse.**

### **When will my catheter need changing?**

Your Nurse will advise you on how often your catheter needs changing and also how to obtain further supplies of catheter equipment.

PETERBOROUGH AREA – ring 0800 917 9865 to obtain a prescription for further catheter supplies and equipment.

LINCOLNSHIRE AREA - Contact your GP to obtain contact number for your District Nurse. The nurse will arrange to change you catheter and order supplies.

### **How do I look after my catheter on a daily basis?**

- Empty the leg bag when it is two thirds full of urine.
- If you have a valve instead of a leg bag, you should open the valve and empty your bladder:
  - When you feel that it is full
  - Before going to bed
  - First thing in the morning
  - During the night if necessary
  - At least every 3-4 hours during the day
  - Before opening your bowels
- Change the leg bag or valve once a week.
- To help prevent infection, only disconnect the leg bag or valve weekly when it is replaced with a new one.
- Attach a night bag to the leg bag or valve every night, to prevent having to empty the bag overnight. Remember to open the valve from your leg bag, which is connected to the night bag.

- Attaching a night bag to a valve is optional. If you do use a night bag, remember to open the valve while the bag is attached so your bladder can drain.
- Close the leg bag or catheter valve and remove the night bag every morning and empty.
- Replace the blue/white cap to the top of the night bag tube.
- Make sure your leg bag is well supported with straps or a net sleeve.
- Your catheter should also be stabilised so that the leg bag doesn't pull on it.
- If you have a suprapubic catheter and there is a small leakage around the insertion site, you may require a dressing for the first few days until the leakage has stopped. The area can be washed as described below when the dressing has been removed.

### How can I reduce the risk of getting an infection?

- Wash your hands before and after touching your catheter.
- Wash the skin in the area where the catheter enters the body with mild soap and water at least once a day.
- Men should carefully wash under the foreskin (unless you have been circumcised). Dry the area thoroughly.
- Avoid the use of talc, antiseptic, bubble bath or bath salts and creams. These can cause irritation.
- Do not remove your leg bag when you have a bath or shower.

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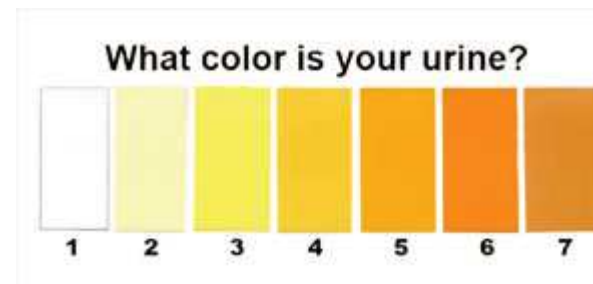
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## What should my urine look like?

- Urine should be a light yellow colour. If it is orange/dark brown, you may not be drinking enough fluid.



1-3 Hydrated

4-5 Moderately Dehydrated – drink a bit more

6-7 Dehydrated – start drinking

- Dark urine is not a sign of infection, but of not drinking enough.
- You should drink approximately 1.5 to 2 litres which is 8 cups or 5 mugs of fluid in 24 hours.
- It is common for urine from a catheter to be cloudy and smelly. If this becomes a problem for you, contact your Community Nurse.
- Avoid caffeine as this may irritate your bladder. There is caffeine in tea, coffee, cola and drinking chocolate. Try decaffeinated drinks.
- Some medication and foods may cause discolouration of urine. Your Community Nurse will be happy to discuss this with you.
- If your urine is blood-stained or has specks of blood in it, contact your community Nurse.
- If you are passing bright red blood, you should contact your doctor.

## What should I do if my catheter is not draining or it is leaking?

- Urine leakage can be normal. This is caused by bladder spasm due to irritation of the bladder by the catheter.
- Check the drainage bag is below the level of the bladder, particularly when sitting in a low chair.
- Make sure that the tubing is not twisted or restricted by tight clothing.
- Make sure that the tubing is not pulled tight or stretched as this may restrict urine flow.
- Check that the drainage bag is connected correctly. Make sure that the straps, which secure the leg bag to your leg, are positioned behind the leg bag tube.
- Urine will not drain if the bag is full. Empty the bag when it is two thirds full.
- Constipation can prevent your catheter from draining. Ask your Community Nurse about eating a healthy diet to avoid constipation.
- Change your position and walk around if possible.
- Sometimes you can get a vacuum effect in the bladder which can restrict urine flow. This can be easily resolved by placing your urine drainage bag higher than your bladder for 30 -60mins.
- Urine will not be produced if you are not drinking enough. Make sure that you are drinking enough fluids. (1.5 to 2 litres - 8 cups or 6 mugs in 24 hours).
- Check that your catheter is draining well at regular intervals through out the day.
- Make sure the valve or leg bag is open when connected to the night bag.

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## How do I dispose of used catheter bags?

- Empty the content into the toilet.
- Double wrap the bag (either in newspaper or a plastic bag).
- Place into your household waste bin.

## What about sex?

Sexual intercourse is possible if you take the following steps:

- Wash genitals before and after sexual intercourse.
- Men should fold back their catheter along the length of the penis, apply a condom and use lubricant.
- Women can fold the catheter along their abdomen.
- A suprapubic catheter or intermittent self-catheterisation can be considered for those with an active sex life.

## When should I ask for help?

Your catheter may be uncomfortable at times but if you experience any of the following you should seek advice.

- You experience acute lower abdominal or tummy pain.
- Urine is not draining and you have followed the simple self-help measures within this information passport.
- The catheter falls out.
- There is blood in your urine.
- If the urine is more cloudy and smelly than normal or you experience a burning sensation, which does not improve after drinking extra fluids.

- Urine is leaking around the catheter, enough to make your clothing wet.
- If you are feeling unwell e.g. have a temperature, please contact your Community Nurse.
- Recurring urinary infections should be discussed with your GP as further investigations may be necessary.

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### Patient details

Patient	Name	
	Address	
	Postcode	
	NHS Number	

### Catheterisation details

Reason for catheterization		
Temporary or permanent		
If temp – plans for removal		
Latex Allergy?	Yes	No
Date of first catheterisation		
Catheterised by		
Catheter type and size		
Urine volume drained		

Drainage system – patient referred for home delivery service	
Leg bags	
Night bags	
Catheter valves	

Any problems experienced during catheterisation		
Plan for catheter removal		
District Nurse informed of discharge	Yes	No
Date:		

Plan of care (e.g. change interval, catheter maintenance solutions)

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Date of positive result for MRSA, ESBL, E.Coli, or CPE in the urine	
Date gentamicin given prophylactic prior to insertion/ change of catheter	

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All health care workers should record details of urinary catheterisation in the sections below as well as the appropriate nursing/medical records.

Completion of the passport will enhance continuity of care for the patient between both community and hospital settings.

During the insertion or removal of the catheter there is a possibility of trauma to the urethra. Medical review should be sought if there is any significant trauma or bleeding and antibiotics should be considered according to current local policy. Patients who are known to have an active urinary tract infection (UTI) post catheter change should have antibiotic cover. Refer to local protocols for further details.

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