**SURGICAL SERVICES**

**Care of Your Urinary Catheter, Drainage System and Leg Bag**

Your urinary catheter is a thin tube that enters the bladder and is held in place by a tiny balloon filled with water. The urinary catheter continually drains urine from your bladder. These instructions will tell you how to look after your urinary catheter when you go home. Always wash your hands before you start and after you finish your catheter care.

**PERSONAL HYGIENE:**

You can shower and go back to your normal activities unless you are told otherwise.

**HOW TO LOOK AFTER YOUR CATHETER:**

Your catheter needs to be cleaned twice daily, using soap and water. Wash the skin around your catheter and the catheter tube with warm water, soap and a clean washcloth. Rinse with warm water to remove soap. While you are washing this area, you should watch for signs of infection such as: redness, tenderness, swelling or drainage. After you clean your catheter, you should also wash around your rectum with and after each bowel movement.

**REPORT PROBLEMS EARLY:**

Call your doctor right away if you have problems such as:

* a continuous leakage of urine from around the catheter (a little leakage for a short time may be due to a bladder spasm and is nothing to worry about)
* pain and fullness in your lower abdomen
* a decrease in the amount of urine flowing or no urine draining into catheter bag
* blood or clots in your urine that do not clear with increasing fluid intake
* elevated temperature (above 38oCor 100.4oF), fever and/or chills lasting more than 24 hours
* cloudy, foul smelling urine

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Information is available in alternate formats upon request

**DIET:**

It is important to drink lots of fluids, ideally 4-8 glasses per day while you are awake. It is also important to eat a diet that has lots of fibre to avoid constipation. Sources of fiber are fruits, vegetables and whole grain breads and cereals (All Bran™, Bran Flakes, Shreddies™ and Shredded Wheat).

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

**Connecting, disconnecting, emptying of the overnight drainage bag**

* Always wash your hands before you start and after you are finished.
* Your urinary catheter is attached to a drainage tube that leads to a collection bag. At bedtime, some patients use an overnight collection bag (rather than a leg bag) as it holds more urine so you can sleep for 8 hours without emptying it.
* You can attach the urinary catheter tubing using non allergic tape to your inner thigh. There are securement devices to help with this which can be purchased from your local pharmacy.

Allow slack in catheter so that you won’t pull on the urinary catheter when you move.



**Before going to bed**

1. Hang the overnight collection drainage bag by its hook on the side of the bed. The collection bag should never lie on the floor. If you are not able to hook the collection bag at the side of the bed place a clean towel on the floor next to the bed. Then place the collection bag on the clean towel. When you get into bed, arrange the drainage tubing so it doesn’t kink or loop. Keep the collection bag below the level of your bladder at all times to prevent backflow of urine into your bladder. Always make sure that the clamp at the bottom of the collection bag is closed.
2. In the morning, when you are ready to change to the leg bag, you should empty the nighttime collection bag first. To do this, remove the clamp at the bottom of the bag from its sleeve (without touching the tip) and unclamp it.
3. Let the urine drain into the toilet (or into a measuring container, if you have been given instructions to measure). Do not let the end of the clamp touch the toilet or container.
4. When the collection bag is completely empty, clean the end of the clamp with an alcohol pad and put it back into its sleeve.

**Connecting, disconnecting, emptying of the leg drainage bag**

1. When changing the collection bag, all connections should be wiped with an alcohol pad available for purchase from your Pharmacy.
2. Wash your hands with soap and water.
3. Pinch the catheter closed between your fingers.
4. Remove the old bag.
5. Wipe the end of the catheter with a fresh alcohol pad.
6. Wipe the tip of the new bag with a second new alcohol pad.
7. Connect the new bag.
8. Stop pinching the catheter and wash your hands again.
9. Make sure there are no bends or kinks in the catheter tube.
10. Attach the leg bag to your leg using the straps included. Do not make the straps too tight, make sure they are comfortable. Alternate the leg bag from one side to the other each day.

### Emptying the leg bag

1. Wash your hands.
2. Open the drainage clamp at the end of the bag and drain all the urine into the toilet (or into a measuring container if necessary). Do not let the end of the drainage clamp touch your hands, toilet or the container.
3. After the leg bag is completely empty, clean the end of the drainage clamp with alcohol pad and close it.
4. Wash your hands after you are finished.

**Cleaning the drainage bags**

1. You need cool water, mild liquid soap and white vinegar.
2. Wash your hands.
3. Ensure the clamp is closed at the bottom of the bag.
4. Using a clean funnel or a poultry baster pour mild soap and water

solution into the inside of the bag through the collection tube.

1. Wash the inside of the bag with soap and cool water, (hot water may damage the bag).
2. Rinse the bag with cool water to remove all soap.
3. Mix 1 cup of cool water with 1 cup of white vinegar.
4. Fill the bag halfway with the vinegar solution and shake it.
5. Let the bag sit for 30 minutes.
6. Empty the bag and rinse with cool water.
7. Hang the bag to dry.
8. Wash your hands.

The information contained on this sheet is provided to you and your family to help you in your recovery from this procedure. This document is not intended to replace medical advice from your doctor or healthcare team. If you require more specific/additional medical advice, contact your doctor and healthcare team about your particular healthcare needs.

Protect yourself! Clean (washing or using hand sanitizer) your hands frequently and ask your healthcare providers and visitors to do the same. Clean hands save lives.