

Information for Patients

Urinary Catheters

What is a Catheter?

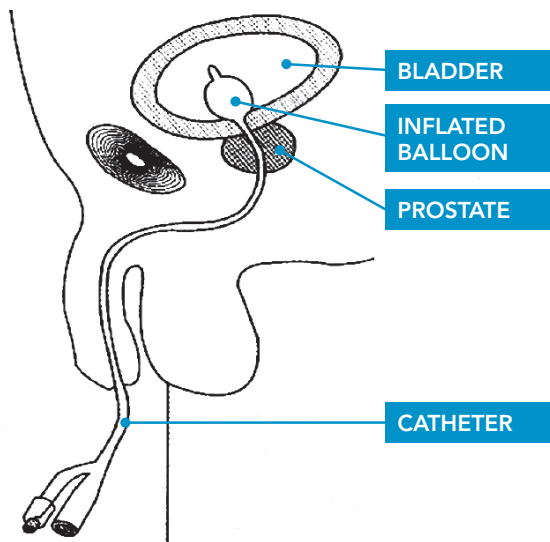
A Catheter is a fine tube placed into your bladder to drain urine. It will be placed for one of the following reasons:

- Inability to pass urine
- To allow healing after urology surgery
- To allow bladder function tests

The Catheter has been introduced into your bladder via your urethra (water pipe) or directly into your abdomen (suprapubic). The Catheter is held in place by a balloon filled with water and will not fall out in normal use.

Most Catheters can be left in place for up to 12 weeks.

Your Doctor/Nurse will tell you when your Catheter is due to be changed.

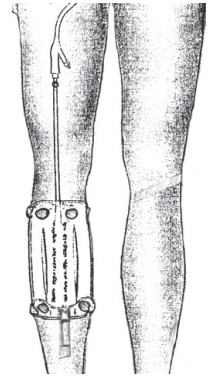


Side view of male with
indwelling Urethral Catheter

Leg Bag

The Catheter is attached to a drainage bag or leg bag. Urine drains directly into this bag.

- This leg bag is to be worn at all times.
- Empty the leg bag using the drainage tap at the bottom of the bag.
- The bag should be emptied every 3-4 hours or before it becomes over-full.
- Always keep the leg bag LOWER than the bladder.
- The leg bag is changed every two weeks.

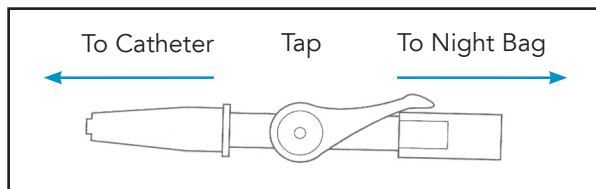


Leg Bag

Catheter Valves (Flip-Flow Valve)

The Catheter Valve fits directly into the end of the Catheter and urine is retained in the bladder until the valve or tap is released.

- A Catheter Valve may be used instead of a leg bag.
- This valve needs to be opened 3-4 hourly or when your bladder feels full.
- The valve is changed every 7 days.



Night Bag

At night a larger bag, called a night bag, is **attached to the bottom outlet of the leg bag** or Catheter Valve. The leg bag or catheter valve is to be worn at all times. The night bag has a larger capacity and longer tubing, allowing greater movement when in bed.

Fitting the Night Bag

1. Remove the coloured cap from the end of the new night bag tubing.
2. Connect night bag tubing to the bottom outlet of the leg bag.
3. Open the outlet tap on the leg bag. Urine will then run freely into the night bag.
4. When in bed the night bag must be lower than your bed to aid drainage.
5. Place the night bag into a container to contain possible leakage from the night bag.

In the Morning

1. Close the leg bag outlet and remove night bag tubing.
2. Empty the night bag contents into the toilet using the drainage tap at the bottom of the bag.
3. Wash out the night bag with warm soapy water and hang up to dry.
4. When dry, store the night bag in a clean plastic sealed bag.



How to keep your Catheter working

- **Always wash your hands before and after touching your Catheter or drainage bag.**
- Avoid constipation, as this can affect Catheter drainage.
- If constipation is a problem ask your Doctor or Nurse for help or advice.
- Where possible, take regular exercise.
- Avoid bending or kinking the Catheter tubing.
- When using an electric blanket, place a drawsheet (or plastic sheet with a fabric backing) between the electric blanket and the sheet as a preventative measure if leakage occurs.

Never try to remove the Catheter without medical or nursing advice – you may hurt yourself.

Personal hygiene

- Wash the area around your urethra and Catheter daily.
- Uncircumcised men: pull the foreskin back up over the tip of the penis after washing.
- Showering is preferable to bathing.
- Leave the leg bag in place.
- Use unscented soap and warm water and rinse well to avoid irritation.
- Dry the area well, including leg bag and straps with a soft towel.
- Avoid using talcum powder or any creams around this area, unless prescribed by your doctor.

When having sexual intercourse

- Both partners should wash the genital area before and after intercourse.
 - Women: tape the Catheter forward onto the abdomen out of the way.
 - Men: fold the Catheter tubing down over the erect penis, apply a condom and tape it in place.
 - Use plenty of water soluble lubricant e.g. KY Jelly.
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Suprapubic Catheter

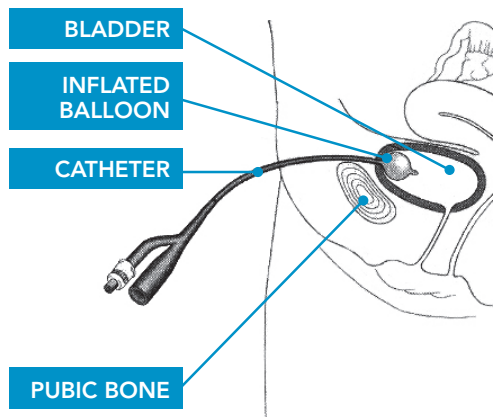
A Suprapubic Catheter drains urine from your bladder. It is inserted into your bladder through a small hole in your abdomen. It emerges at right angles from the abdomen and must be secured until the tract is well established.

It takes four weeks for the tract to become established. The Catheter should not be changed before then, unless under the guidance of a Urologist.

The first change of Catheter is done by a specialist Urology Nurse. After this the District Nurse can do this in the community.

The wound needs to be washed x2 daily and care must be taken with hand washing when handling.

Do not use talcum powder, creams or perfumed soaps.



Problem solving

For most people, managing a Catheter at home is straight forward and free from complications. However, there are some minor problems which may arise.

URINARY INFECTION

Cause	Bacterial contamination
Signs	• Smelly, cloudy urine • Urine bypassing the catheter and leakage around the catheter • Abdominal pain • Bleeding
Treatment	• Increase your fluid intake • Contact your GP who may take a urine sample • Antibiotics are only needed if you are systemically unwell with a fever/temperature. Overuse of antibiotics if you have a catheter will lead to resistance.

THERE IS NO URINE IN YOUR BAG FOR SEVERAL HOURS

Cause	• The tubing could be kinked or bent • The bag is above bladder level • Low fluid intake • Constipation • Blocked catheter due to debris
Signs	Very little or no urine passing into the bag
Treatment	• Check the placement of Catheter tubing and drainage bag • Try moving or walking around and squeeze the tubing to try and dislodge the blockage • If after 4 hours no urine passes then contact your Doctor or Nurse

BLEEDING

Cause	Irritation of bladder or urethra by the Catheter
Signs	Blood in the urine or around the Catheter
Treatment	• Increase your fluid intake • If the bleeding persists or is still heavy after 2 days contact your GP who may take a urine sample and prescribe a course of antibiotics

BLADDER SPASM / LEAKAGE AROUND YOUR CATHETER

Cause	The bladder can be irritated by the Catheter and may attempt to expel the Catheter. This forces urine out around the Catheter causing pain and leakage.
Signs	• Lower abdominal pain • Leakage of urine • Decreased urine in the Catheter Bag
Treatment	• Take regular 4 hourly paracetamol while pain is present • Take regular oxybutynin (anti-spasmodic) tablets to relax the bladder as prescribed by your Doctor • If pain persists, contact your Doctor or Nurse

CATHETER FALLING OUT OR LEAKING

Cause	• Faulty balloon or damaged Catheter • Bladder spasm
Treatment	• If you can pass urine call your Nurse in office hours • If you cannot pass urine yourself, and the bladder becomes painful, seek immediate help from your Nurse or GP.

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associates

George Acland
MB ChB, FRACS
Urologist

Kevin Bax
MB ChB, FRACS
Urologist

Nick Buchan
MB ChB, FRACS
Urologist

Deborah Friberg
MB ChB, FRACS
Urologist

Frank Kueppers
Dr. med.
Urologist

Giovanni Losco
MB ChB, FRACS
Adult & Paediatric
Urologist

Jane MacDonald
MB ChB, FRACS
Urologist

Stephen Mark
MB ChB, FRACS
Adult & Paediatric
Urologist

Louise Rouse
BHB, MB ChB, FRACS
Urologist

Urology Associates

Forte Health, 132 Peterborough Street
PO Box 917, Christchurch 8140

P: 03 355 5129

E: reception@urology.co.nz

www.urology.co.nz