
Foley Catheter Care

A Foley catheter is a soft, flexible tube that is placed into the bladder to drain urine. A Foley catheter may be inserted if:

- You leak urine or are not able to control when you urinate (*urinary incontinence*)
- You are not able to urinate when you need to (*urinary retention*)
- You had vaginal surgery
- You have certain medical conditions, such as multiple sclerosis, dementia, or a spinal cord injury

If you are going home with a Foley catheter in place, follow the instructions below.

TAKING CARE OF THE CATHETER

1. Wash your hands with soap and water
2. Using mild soap and warm water on a clean washcloth:
 - a. Clean the area on your body closest to the catheter insertion site using a circular motion, moving away from the catheter. NEVER wipe toward the catheter as this could sweep bacteria up into the urethra and cause infection
 - b. Remove all traces of soap. Pat the area dry with a clean towel.
3. Attach the catheter to your leg so there is no tension on the catheter. Use adhesive tape or a leg strap. If you are using adhesive tape, remove any sticky residue left behind by the previous tape you used.
4. Keep the drainage bag below the level of the bladder, but keep it off the floor
5. Check throughout the day to be sure the catheter is working and urine is draining freely. Make sure the tubing does not become kinked
6. **DO NOT** pull on the catheter or try to remove it. Pulling could damage internal tissues.

TAKING CARE OF THE DRAINAGE BAGS

You will be given two drainage bags to take home. One is a large overnight drainage bag, and the other is a smaller leg bag that fits underneath clothing. You may wear the overnight bag at any time, but you should never wear the smaller leg bag at night. Follow the instructions below for how to empty, change, and clean your drainage bags.

Emptying the Drainage Bag

You must empty your drainage bag when it is $\frac{1}{3}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ full or at least 2-3 times per day.

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Keep the drainage bag below your hips, below the level of your bladder. This stops urine from going back into the tubing and into your bladder.

3. Hold the dirty bag over the toilet or a clean container
4. Open the pour spout at the bottom of the bag and empty the urine into the toilet or container. **DO NOT** let the pour spout touch the toilet, container, or any other surface. Doing so can place bacteria on the bag, which can cause an infection.
5. Clean the pour spout with a gauze pad or cotton ball that has rubbing alcohol on it.
6. Close the pour spout.
7. Attach the bag to your leg with adhesive tape or a leg strap.
8. Wash your hands well.

Changing the Drainage Bag

Change your drainage bag once a month or sooner if it starts to smell bad or look dirty. Below are steps to follow when changing the drainage bag.

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Pinch off the rubber catheter so that urine does not spill out.
3. Disconnect the catheter tube from the drainage tube at the connection valve. **DO NOT** let the tubes touch any surface.
4. Clean the end of the catheter tube with an alcohol wipe. Use a different alcohol wipe to clean the end of the drainage tube.
5. Connect the catheter tube to the drainage tube of the clean drainage bag.
6. Attach the new bag to the leg with adhesive tape or a leg strap. Avoid attaching the new bag too tightly.
7. Wash your hands well.

Cleaning the Drainage Bag

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Wash the bag in warm, soapy water.
3. Rinse the bag thoroughly with warm water.
4. Fill the bag with a solution of white vinegar and water (1 cup vinegar to 1 quart warm water [0.2 L vinegar to 1 L warm water]). Close the bag and soak it for 30 minutes in the solution.
5. Rinse the bag with warm water
6. Hang the bag to dry with the pour spout open and hanging downward.
7. Store the clean bag (once it is dry) in a clean plastic bag.
8. Wash your hands well.

PREVENTING INFECTION

- Wash your hands before and after handling your catheter.
- Take showers daily and wash the area where the catheter enters your body. **DO NOT** take baths. Replace wet leg straps with dry ones, if this applies.
- **DO NOT** use powders, sprays, or lotions in the genital area. Only use creams, lotions, or ointments as directed by your caregiver.
- Wipe from front to back after each bowel movement.

- Drink enough fluids to keep your urine clear or pale yellow unless you have a fluid restriction
- **DO NOT** let the drainage bag or tubing touch or lie on the floor
- Wear cotton underwear to absorb moisture and to keep your skin drier.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your urine is cloudy or smells unusually bad
- Your catheter becomes clogged
- You are not draining urine into the bag or your bladder feels full
- Your catheter starts to leak.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have pain, swelling, redness, or pus where the catheter enters the body
- You have pain in the abdomen, legs, lower back, or bladder.
- You have a fever.
- You see blood fill the catheter, or your urine is pink or red.
- You have nausea, vomiting, or chills.
- Your catheter gets pulled out.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions
- Will watch your condition
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or getting worse