This leaflet is designed to help you and/or your carers look after your catheter.

If you have any questions that are not covered or if you need further assistance please ask your nurse or doctor.

What you can expect from the nurse or doctor looking after you:-

1. To have any procedure explained fully to you including any possible problems that may happen

2. To wash their hands before and after giving you any care

3. To perform any procedure as per NHS Borders Policy.
Contact numbers

GP Surgery .................................................................
(Monday—Friday 08.00 - 18.00)

District Nurse..............................................................
(Monday—Friday 08.00 - 18.00)

NHS 24- 08454 24 24 24
(18.00—08.00 and weekends)

Before every catheter change your nurse or doctor will review the need for its use, and if appropriate will arrange for a trial without catheter.
What is a catheter?

A catheter is a hollow tube, which is put into the bladder via the urethra (the passage through which you normally pass urine) which allows urine to drain into a urine drainage bag.

The catheter is kept in place by a small balloon on the catheter tip which is blown up once the catheter is in the bladder.

Insertion and changing of a catheter

This can be done by your nurse, either at home, health centre or hospital.

Changing your catheter

A catheter can stay in place for up to 12 weeks but in some cases it may need to be changed more often.

If you wish, you or your carer can be taught how to change your catheter. Ask your nurse or doctor about this.
How does the urine drain?

A drainage bag is attached to the catheter, which allows the urine to be collected.

There are two kinds of bag:
- a leg bag ( worn under your clothing)
- a bed/night bag (for use overnight)

The catheter and leg bag make what is called a closed drainage system.

This helps prevent bacteria (germs) getting into the system and therefore reduces the risk of a urine infection.

The leg bag should only be disconnected from the catheter when you are changing the leg bag. This should be done under sterile conditions. Your nurse will explain how this is performed.

Some people may be able to use a catheter valve instead of a leg bag.

Your nurse will be able to give you further advice.
female Urinary Tract with Catheter in Place

Bladder

Pubic Bone

Womb or Uterus

Rectum

Anus

Vagina

catheter

tale Urinary Tract with Catheter in Place

Pubic Bone

Prostate

Urethra

Bladder

Rectum

Anus

Catheter
Wearing a leg bag

The leg bag is attached either to your thigh or lower leg with Velcro straps or a mesh sleeve.

Where you wear the bag depends on what feels comfortable for you.

An special strap on the thigh should be used to help to secure your catheter.

Leg bags come in three different sizes, holding 350ml, 500ml, or 750ml.

There are also four different tube lengths; direct (leading straight to the bag), short, medium and long.

The leg bag can be hidden under your clothes. Your nurse will help you choose the one that suits you best.
How do I empty a leg bag?

The leg bag should be emptied when it is 2/3rds full or every 2-3 hours:-

1. Wash your hands
2. Open the tap at the bottom of the leg bag and allow the urine to drain into the toilet or container
3. Do not to let the drainage tap touch the rim of the toilet or container
4. Dry the drainage tap with toilet paper after emptying the bag
5. Close the drainage tap and wash it with soap and water after you have emptied the bag
6. If using a container wash and dry it thoroughly after use
7. Wash your hands after you have emptied the bag.

How often should I change the leg bag?

A leg bag can be left on for up to 7 days. Change it sooner if it becomes damaged or difficult to empty.

Remember that you should avoid breaking the closed drainage system as this helps to reduce the risk of infection.
What happens at night?

When you go to bed you should connect your leg bag or catheter valve to a 2 litre non-drainable night bag.

Remember to open the drainage tap at the bottom of your leg bag once you have connected the 2 litre night bag. Urine can then drain through the leg bag and into the bed/night bag overnight.

By linking the leg bag to the 2 litre night bag you maintain the closed drainage system and increase the amount of urine that can be held overnight so that you can have an uninterrupted nights sleep. Loosen your leg straps when you get into bed. Support the bed/night bag on the special hanger or floor stand, which your nurse will provide.

In the morning disconnect the bed bag from the leg bag.

Remember to close the drainage tap on the leg bag.

Empty the urine from the 2 litre night bag down the toilet by tearing the top right corner of the bag (if your bag has no tap) and dispose of the used bag, do not re-use this bag.
Use a new bed bag each night

How do I dispose of the bags?

Empty any urine from the used drainage bag, put into a plastic bag and put in the waste dustbin.

Storage and supply of catheters and bags

Your nurse will advise you about obtaining supplies of bags and catheters.
Store spare catheters and bags in their original packaging.

Keep in a dry, safe place away from direct heat, sunlight or extreme cold.

How much and what do I drink?

Try and drink about 1.5—2 litres (which is equivalent to 3-4 pints or 6-9 cups) of liquid every day.

Water and fruit juice are recommended. Avoid too many drinks which are high in caffeine, e.g. coffee, tea and cola, which can irritate your bladder.

What should I eat?

Eat a normal diet that includes plenty of fresh fruit, vegetables and cereals to provide sufficient fibre to prevent constipation.

A full bowel can press on the catheter and stop urine flowing freely.

Talk to your nurse if you have any problems with constipation.
What about sexual intercourse?

Sexual activity is entirely possible for men and women with a urinary catheter.

We would advise that you discuss this further with your Doctor or Nurse.

Catheter care

If possible have a daily shower (preferably) or bath. Do this with your leg bag attached to the catheter. You may remove the straps or supportive sleeve but empty the bag first.

Wash the area round your catheter daily with soap and water. Dry gently and thoroughly with a clean towel.

Men with a foreskin need to wash and rinse under their foreskin.

Do not use talcum powder or creams near the catheter.

Always wash your hands before and after changing or draining your catheter bag. Avoid pulling on your catheter and avoid tight clothing which can cut off the flow of urine.
What should I do if the catheter leaks? (bypassing)

Urine can sometimes leak around the catheter. Check that the catheter or tubing is not kinked. Try to adjust the tubing and make sure that the bag is below the level of your bladder. Bypassing can also be due to bladder spasm, infection or constipation.

Talk to your nurse if this is a problem for you

When should I call for help?

- if the catheter falls out
- if urine is repeatedly bypassing the catheter
- if there is no urine draining into your drainage bag
- if you feel the need to pass urine and there is no urine or significantly less urine draining into your drainage bag
- if you feel generally unwell such as a raised temperature, abdominal discomfort, lower back pain or pain around your catheter
- if there is blood in your urine
Copies of this booklet will become available on request in:
Large print
Different languages
Audiotape
Braille format
BSL DVD

Review May 2019