

CARING FOR YOUR URINARY CATHETER

What is a urinary catheter?

- A urinary catheter is a hollow and flexible tube that collects urine from the bladder and leads to a drainage bag.
- It allows continuous drainage of urine from the bladder into a urine collection bag, which is kept in place by an inflated balloon.

Why are urinary catheters used?

A doctor may recommend a catheter if you have:

- An acute or chronic urinary retention (being unable to empty your bladder when you need to).
- Urinary incontinence (leaking urine or being unable to control when you urinate).
- Plans to go for surgery.
- Neurogenic bladder from spinal cord injury.

What are the types of catheters?

- Intermittent catheters – they are used to relieve acute retention of urine temporarily.
- Indwelling catheters – they are left in the bladder for a longer time.

How do I care for my urinary catheter?

- Never pull out your catheter and try to remove it yourself.
- Wash your hands with soap and water before and after handling the catheter.
- Bathe the area around the catheter where it exits your genital area with mild soap and water daily, or when necessary.
- Always keep the urine bag below the waistline.
- Ensure urine is draining out into the bag. Empty the drainage bag when it is half full.
- Drink at least 1.5 L/7 to 8 glasses of water a day unless contraindicated.
- Keep to your appointment to change the indwelling catheter.
- **Do not** use any lotions or powders over the perineal area.
- **Do not** twist or kink the urinary catheter and drainage tube.

How do I empty the collection bag?

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Wipe the drainage spout with an alcohol wipe.
- Open the drainage spout and empty all the urine into the toilet bowl.
- Close the drainage spout and wipe it dry with an alcohol wipe to remove the excess urine.
- Wash your hands with soap and water.

How do I change my collection bag?

The bag should be changed once a month or when it is damaged, dirty or emits a foul smell.

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Empty the collection bag.
- Use an alcohol wipe to clean the connection site of the catheter.
- Pinch the catheter tubing above the drainage bag connection using your thumb and forefinger.
- Use a twisting motion to disconnect the catheter tubing and bag from the catheter.
- Insert the new catheter tubing into the catheter.
- Wash your hands with soap and water.

When should I consult the doctor?

Seek medical attention immediately if any of the following occurs:

- Fever.
- Bloody or cloudy urine.
- Burning sensation at the urethra.
- Difficulty or inability to urinate.
- Redness of skin around penis/scrotum or swelling and/or pain around the entry/exit point of catheter.
- Urine leakage from bag or entry/exit point of catheter.
- Catheter is dislodged from the urethra.
- Prolonged discomfort or pain.

Do you know that you can obtain a urine catheter from our NUP polyclinics which can be kept in place for a longer duration? For more information, please check with our nurses.