Instructions for Going Home with an Indwelling Urinary Catheter

An indwelling urinary catheter is a tube inserted into the bladder through the urethra (urinary tube). A balloon on the end of the catheter holds it inside the bladder. Urine will continually drain through the catheter. Make sure to follow these instructions to reduce your risk of infection.

During the day, you can use a smaller drainage bag (leg bag) which straps to your leg and fits under your clothing. At night, the leg bag is changed to a larger bag (hospital style) so you won’t have to worry about emptying the bag overnight.

To care for your catheter, follow these guidelines:

- Wash your hands with soap and water before and after handling the catheter, tubing or bags.
- Keep tubing free of kinks to maintain urine flow. Avoid tugging or pulling on the catheter and tubing.
- There should be a gentle curve in the tubing before the catheter is taped to the groin (males) or the upper thigh (females). Tape well to stop tubing from dragging or pulling on the urethra.

- Keep the drainage bag below your bladder level at all times.
- Do not place the drainage bag on the floor. Hook on a chair leg, bedrail, or place in a container.
- Wash the skin around the catheter (buttocks, between the thighs, the groin and lower abdomen) at least once daily with a clean cloth and warm soapy water. Rinse and dry with a clean towel. This will help the area from becoming irritated and infected. Wash the area after sexual intercourse.
- Empty the drainage bag when two-thirds full, into the toilet. Do not let the drain spout touch the toilet or the container.
- If your doctor has NOT asked you to limit the amount of fluid you drink, drink at least 8 to 10 glasses, (1.5 to 2 litres) of fluid each day.
- Showering with your indwelling catheter is fine. Do NOT go into pools, hot tubs or bathtubs.

Daily care of equipment
You will need the following supplies:
- tape, non-allergic
- measuring spoon & cup
- cotton balls
- rubbing alcohol
  Optional: Purchased premade alcohol swabs
- turkey baster or 50 mL syringe
  Optional: Purchased urinary system cleaning set
- household white vinegar
- large covered container for mixing vinegar solution (e.g. canning jar)

Emptying the bag
1. Wash your hands.
2. Unclamp the drainage spout and allow the urine to drain into a collection container or toilet, making sure the drainage spout does not come into contact with anything else. If this happens promptly clean the spout with an alcohol soaked cotton ball.
3. Close the valve.
4. Wash your hands.

Healthlink BC
Dial 8-1-1
Talk to a Nurse 24 hours/day, 7 days/week
Pharmacist available between 5 p.m. - 9 a.m. daily
Dietitian between 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. - Monday to Friday
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5. Clean the drainage spout with a tissue.
6. Replace the spout in the sleeve of the collection bag.

Changing the bags and tubing
1. Wash your hands.
2. Empty the catheter bag.
3. Clamp the catheter (pinch off with your one hand or use a catheter clamp)
4. Separate the tubing from the catheter. Do not touch the open ends of the catheter or the tubing.
5. Connect the catheter to the clean bag.
6. Clean the catheter end and the tubing end with alcohol using a cotton ball. Discard the used cotton ball.
7. Secure the catheter tubing with tape (for night drainage) or use the leg straps (day drainage).
8. Wash your hands.

Cleaning the bags and tubing
After a urinary drainage bag is removed, it is important to clean the bag and tubing to prevent infection. Follow this procedure:
1. Wash your hands.
2. Empty all urine from the bag into the toilet.
3. Using cool tap water, flush the catheter tubing and bag until clear. Empty into toilet.
4. Using a turkey baster or syringe, squirt warm soapy water into the drainage bag and tubing. If the catheter tubing and bag have an odor, use 2 parts white vinegar to 4 parts tap water. Agitate to mix. Rinse well with tap water.

Note: You may use a urinary cleanser and deodorizer from a medical supply store instead.
5. Air dry the bag and tubing, leaving the ends open. Hang the bag with the spout open and tubing unwrapped to allow drying.
6. Store in a clean, dry place.
7. Wash your hands.

Contact your doctor if you have:
• urine leaking around the catheter
• back or abdominal pain accompanied by a fever (more than 38.5° C or 101° F)
• foul smelling urine
• blood in the urine that does not clear with drinking extra fluids
• unwell feeling, nausea or vomiting
• new onset of feeling tired or change in mental status
• redness or pus where the catheter enters the body
• if catheter falls out
• small amount of urine flow
• any other questions or concerns

Cleaning the catheter tubing
Wash the catheter tubing at least two times a day and after each bowel movement.
1. Wash your hands.
2. Detach catheter tubing from leg.
3. Females gently pull back labia, males gently retract foreskin if uncircumcised.
4. Wash area where the catheter enters your body with warm soapy water and a clean cloth. Clean from where the catheter enters your body and then down the catheter and the tubing. Hold the catheter so it does not pull away from the body.
5. Rinse with clean water and dry with a clean towel. Replace foreskin if pulled back.
6. Wipe again.

Health Care Professional reviewed:

Questions:

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