



**NL Health
Services**

Urinary Catheter Care at Home

Children and Women's Health

A urinary catheter is a hollow plastic or rubber tube that is placed into your bladder to drain urine ("pee"). The tube is put in place by your healthcare provider and is held in place by a small balloon filled with water.

Keeping your Urinary Catheter Clean

It is important to keep the tube clean to prevent infection and keep the skin around your tube from becoming sore.

- Always wash your hands before and after handling your tube or emptying the bag or changing the bag.
- Gently wash the catheter (where it leaves your body) and your genital area with soap and water and rinse well. It's best to do this in the shower, if you can. Gently dry with a clean towel. Wash your catheter and genital area every day.
- Do not put powder or lotion on the catheter or genital area.

Using Urinary Catheter Bags

- For convenience you can use the smaller leg bag in the daytime and always use the large bag when in bed.
- Do not wash out the bags. Bags should only be drained and the end covered with a cap.
- Wash your hands and empty your catheter bag into the toilet. Do not touch the opening where the urine comes out from.
- You can empty the bag every few hours in the daytime. Make sure that your leg bag does not have more than 250 mL of urine. Your night bag should be emptied right before you go to sleep and not have more than 1000 to 1500 mL of urine in it at a time.

When Wearing a Leg Bag:

- Make sure that the straps are not too tight as they could block the flow of urine into the drainage back or the flow of blood in your legs causing your skin to become sore.
- Change which leg you use every 1 to 2 days. For example, if you use your right leg today, use the left leg tomorrow.
- Empty your leg bag into the toilet several times a day. This will make it easier to keep the bag in place on your legs.

How do I change my drainage bag?

1. Empty the drainage bag into the toilet before changing.
2. Wipe the connection between the catheter and the drainage tube with a 70% alcohol swab.
3. Pinch or squeeze the catheter tubing closed when disconnecting the drainage bag to keep urine from leaking out.
4. Remove the drainage bag tubing from the catheter. Do not touch the open ends of the tubing or catheter when you disconnect them.
5. Attach the clean drainage bag tubing to the catheter. Keep the tubing straight so it drains downwards.
6. Unpinch the catheter.

Points to Remember:

- Drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluids every day. This will help to keep your urine (“pee”) clear and prevent your catheter (tube) from blocking.
- Call the Women’s Health Clinic at 709-777-7460 with questions about your appointments.
- Go to the Emergency Department of the nearest hospital if:
 - the tube is not draining or is blocked
 - you have abdominal pain which could indicate a full bladder and the catheter not draining properly
 - there is urine (pee) leaking around the tube
 - you have a fever or are feeling generally unwell