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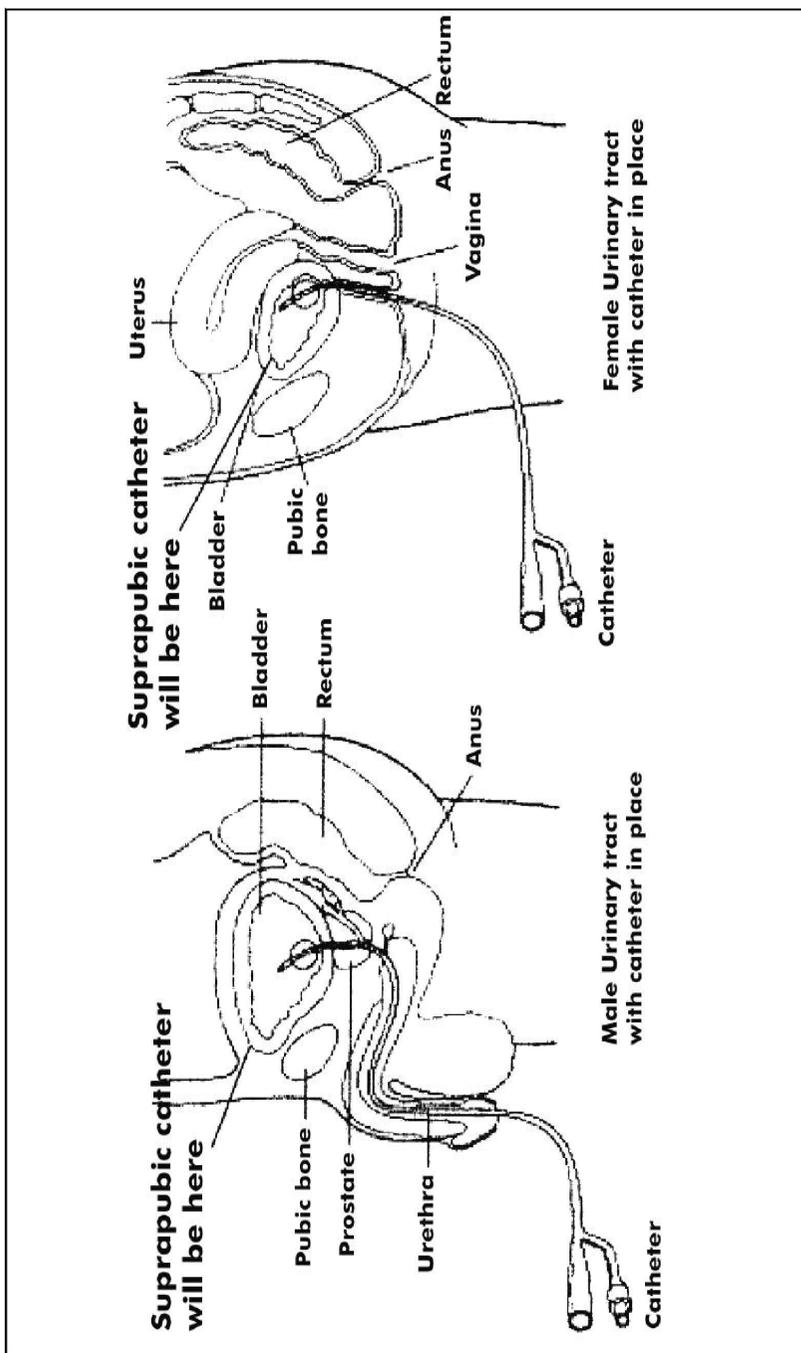


## Indwelling Urinary Catheters and Drainage Systems

### Information for patients



Information for patients about urinary catheters and drainage systems



## Useful organisations

Bladder and Bowel Foundation  
Phone: **0845 345 0165**

ERIC – Enuresis Resource and Information Centre  
Phone: **0845 370 8008**

The Interstitial Cystitis Support Group  
Phone: **0121 702 0820**

The Multiple Sclerosis Helpline  
Phone: **0808 800 8000**

Parkinson's Disease Society Helpline  
Phone: **0808 800 0303**

PromoCon / Disabled Living  
Phone: **0161 607 8219**

The Stroke Association  
Phone: **0303 3033 100**

With thanks to Somerset Community Health for all their help in devising this booklet.

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Nurse's name</b>	
<b>Contact numbers</b>	
<b>Catheter size</b>	
<b>Catheter type and code</b>	
<b>Leg bag</b>	
<b>Catheter valve</b>	
<b>Night bag</b>	
<b>Reason why catheter is used</b>	
<b>Have you ever had a trial without a catheter?</b>	
<b>Notes</b>	

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## Why do people need a urinary catheter?

### Many people need to be catheterised at some time in their lives.

It may be that your bladder muscles have lost the ability to contract enough to completely empty your bladder. Alternatively, you may need an indwelling catheter following an operation or because of a health condition you were born with.

Catheterisation is a technique which helps people who cannot control or have difficulties emptying their bladder to get on with their lives.

It is important to follow a healthy diet by eating five fruit and vegetable portions a day as recommended by the Department of Health. Make sure that you drink between 1.5 to 2 Litres of fluid every day, reducing levels of caffeine where possible.

**If your catheter was fitted in the Accident and Emergency Department, they will inform the Urology Specialist Nurses who will contact you with an appointment for removal. This is usually within two weeks of the catheter being fitted.**

If your catheter was fitted on a hospital ward or in the community, the District Nursing Team will contact you to discuss catheter care and catheter changing.

### How your bladder and kidneys work

Kidneys filter waste products from the blood to produce urine. This is passed to the bladder via two tubes called ureters. When the bladder is full, urine is passed through the urethra (water pipe) and out of the body.

If your bladder does not work properly, sometimes urine can be left behind. If this urine is not removed it can become stale and may cause infection and discomfort. It may also cause some back pressure on your kidneys. Using a urinary catheter will allow your bladder to be emptied.

## 2. If your catheter still appears to be blocked:

Answer:

1. Empty leg bag /night bag.
2. Wait for one hour, if bag is still empty, then contact the following services:

8.00 am-6.00 pm – your GP Surgery/District Nurse

6.00 pm-8.00 am – phone Twilight & Out of Hours Service - 01225 832383

### Contact details

#### Sirona Care & Health Continence Promotion Unit

St Martins Hospital  
Midford House  
Midford Road  
Bath  
BA2 5RP

Tel: 01225 831766

Fax: 01225 835750

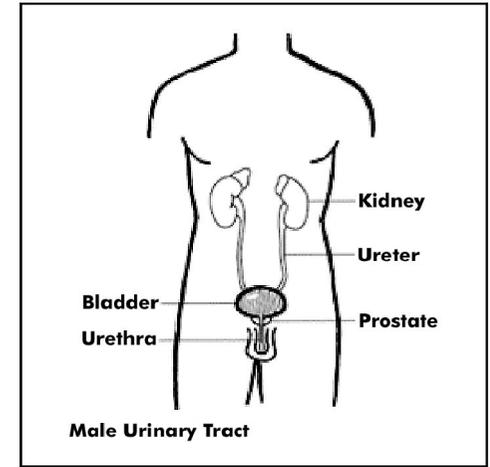
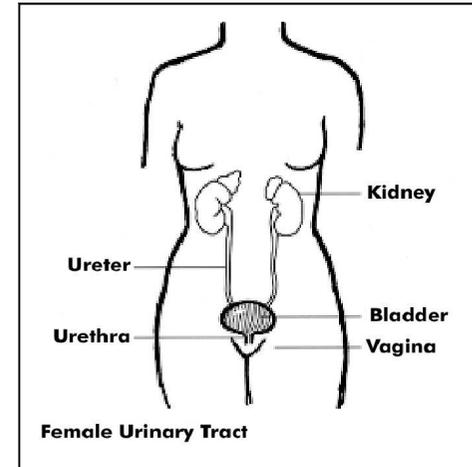
## Catheter care

### Basic trouble shooting

#### 1. Here are some initial points to consider if your catheter appears to have stopped draining:

Possible answers:

- Is any of the tubing kinked or squashed, for example, between crossed legs?
- Is the tubing leading to the leg bag being squashed by the leg strap being placed over the top of the tube entering the bag?
- Is the bag higher than your bladder?
- Is the bag too low causing a suction effect? This causes the lining of the bladder to be sucked into the catheter eye holes and can block drainage.
- Is the bag too full?
- Is the bag upside down?
- Has the bag been attached to the catheter with its cap still on?
- Has the bag become disconnected?
- Has the catheter become dislodged or fallen out?
- Are you constipated? A full bowel can press against the bladder, blocking catheter drainage.
- Are you experiencing bladder spasm where urine sometimes goes down the outside of the catheter tube rather than into the bag?



### Urinary Catheters

A urinary catheter is a hollow flexible tube, which drains urine from your bladder. The catheter reaches the bladder either by passing through the urethra or through a channel made in the abdominal wall just above the pubic bone (suprapubic catheterisation).

Once the catheter is in place, a small balloon at the catheter tip is inflated inside the bladder to prevent the catheter from falling out. As urine fills the bladder it drains down the catheter into a drainage bag or catheter valve. You should not need to pass urine in the usual way when you have a catheter in place.

### Types of catheters

There are different types of catheters that are in use. These are summarised below. Catheters are made of specifically designed materials, such as latex or silicone, to ensure comfort and safety.

#### Short - term catheters

These are only left in for up to 28 days.

#### Long - term catheters

These can be used for up to 12 weeks.

## Type of drainage system

There are different types of drainage systems to use with your catheter: these include catheter valves and drainage bags.

## Living with your catheter

### Getting started

When you start using your catheter, you will probably have the feeling that you need to pass urine or may experience a bladder spasm or cramp from time to time. This usually stops within 24 to 48 hours and is nothing to be concerned about.

You may experience a slight urine leak outside of the catheter as a result of a spasm. This is not an emergency providing the catheter is draining, however, you should notify your nurse or GP as you may require medication to “calm” the bladder.

### Personal hygiene

Wash the area where the catheter enters your body with mild soap and warm water at least twice a day. Dry thoroughly and never use talcum powders or ointments in contact with the catheter as some ointments, such as petroleum jelly, can actually damage the catheter. Always wash your hands before and after draining or changing a bag. Do not kink or clamp the catheter tubing.

### What should I eat and drink?

You need to drink at least eight teacups or five mugs (1.5 litres) of mixed fluid every day to ensure your catheter drains well. Eat plenty of fresh fruit, vegetables and cereals to avoid constipation.

## Using your catheter on holiday

If you are going on holiday, make sure that you have plenty of catheter valves and drainage bags to take with you and a spare catheter. Pack these in your hand luggage for the plane as well as in your baggage in case your suitcase gets lost.

### Where do I get my products?

The products are prescribed by your GP or District Nurse and the prescription can be obtained either at a pharmacy. Stock levels of your product should be advised by your healthcare professional.

### When to call for help

This will depend on the patient but usually help should be sought if any of the following occurs:

- The catheter is blocked
- There is no urine in the bag after two to three hours
- The catheter falls out
- Urine keeps leaking around the catheter
- Your urine is cloudy, smelly or gives a burning sensation and does not improve after drinking more fluids
- You have a temperature / fever
- You experience acute lower abdominal pain
- The urine suddenly becomes blood stained or discoloured

### **Always keep a spare catheter at home in case of emergency**

### How often should I change my leg bag?

A leg bag should be changed every seven days . It should only be changed earlier if it is damaged.

### Disposing of the drainage bag

Empty the bag, remove it and connect a new one. Wrap the bag in a plastic bag before disposing of it in the household rubbish.

### Frequently asked questions

#### How do I store my catheters and catheter valves or drainage bags?

Store catheters, catheter valves and drainage bags in their original packaging in a dry, safe place away from direct heat and sunlight.

#### Can I have sex with an indwelling urethral catheter in place?

Intercourse is usually possible for both men and women with a urethral catheter. For women the catheter should be taped out of the way along the abdomen. Men can tape the catheter along with the penis and apply condom although it may be more comfortable to remove the catheter prior to intercourse and replace it with a new catheter afterwards. The drainage bag should be emptied before sexual activity. A suprapubic catheter may make sexual intercourse easier.

### Problem solving

If no urine is draining into your bag:

- Check the catheter tubing is not kinked or blocked
- Check the drainage bag is below bladder level
- Check the drainage bag is connected correctly and does not need emptying
- Make sure you are drinking enough fluid
- Avoid constipation

## Catheter valves

### Getting started

The catheter valve is a tap-like device which fits into the end of your catheter. It can be used whether your catheter is permanent or temporary. The valve offers an alternative to using a drainage bag. Your bladder continues to store urine and can be emptied intermittently by releasing the valve thus helping to maintain normal function of the bladder.

Many people prefer to use a catheter valve as it is a more discreet and comfortable than a leg bag and may reduce the risk of infection and blockage by intermittently flushing the catheter with urine. A catheter valve increases the options available to you for the drainage of urine.

### How do I use my catheter valve?

Please follow the recommendations made by your GP or nurse. You should open your catheter valve whenever you feel the need to pass urine before bed, first thing in the morning (and during the night if necessary), at least every four hours during the day and before opening your bowels.

### How do I wear my catheter valve?

You may find that your catheter valve will tuck into your underwear, alternately support it with a catheter retainer strap on your upper thigh.

### How often should I change my catheter valve?

A catheter valve should be changed every seven days, earlier if damaged.

Catheter valves can also be used with a bed bag at night or with a leg bag during the day if toilet access is likely to be a problem.

## Disposing of the valve

Empty your bladder then remove the old catheter valve and replace it with a new one. Rinse the catheter valve and place in a plastic bag before disposing of the bag in the household rubbish.

## Drainage bags

You will need two types of drainage bags with your catheter:

Leg bag — which is worn under your normal clothing during the day

Bed bag — to be used at night. The bed bag is larger than a leg bag and is connected to the bottom of the leg bag to collect the urine which drains from your bladder overnight.

## Closed system

The catheter and leg bag form a “closed” drainage system, which prevents bacteria getting into the system and reduces the risk of infection. The leg bag should only be disconnected from the catheter when the bag needs replacing (such as every seven days).

## How do I wear the leg bag?

How you wear the leg bag depends on how it is situated. The bag can be attached to your thigh or calf with a pair of leg bag straps or worn inside a special bag against the leg. The leg bag comes in different sizes and different tube lengths. Your nurse will help you choose the one that suits you best.

As the leg bag fills, it becomes heavier. Do not allow the bag to become too full. To empty the bag, firstly wash your hands thoroughly, open the tap at the bottom of the bag and drain it into toilet or suitable container. Then turn the tap off, wipe the end of the tap with toilet paper and then wash your hands.