



How to use your catheter with confidence in hospital or at home, and help reduce risk of infection

IMPORTANT

Remember to reduce the risk of infection, always wash and dry your hands before and after touching your catheter or drainage system.

What is a catheter?

A catheter is a soft, hollow tube which is passed up the urethra (bladder opening) and into the bladder, it then drains urine. It is held inside you by a small balloon.

If your catheter is for long-term use it will be changed every 12 weeks or sooner if necessary.

Drainage system - There is a drainage bag for daytime use, called a Leg Bag. Leg Bags are held in place with either straps or a support sleeve.

At night-time a 2 litre night bag can be attached directly to your leg bag to provide additional drainage. A Catheter Valve is an alternative to a drainage bag, please discuss this with your nurse or doctor.

About your Leg Bag

Emptying your leg bag

Check your bag every 2-3 hours (with the exception of during the night - further details below) and empty the bag when it is two-thirds full. When you empty your leg bag you must:

- wash and dry your hands.
- open the tap at the bottom of the leg bag and empty the urine into a clean jug (kept specifically for this) or directly into the toilet. Be careful not to touch the bag tap against the toilet (risk of infection).
- close the tap and wipe it dry with clean tissue.
- wash and dry your hands.

Changing your leg bag

- Change your leg bag weekly.
- Wash and dry your hands.
- Empty the leg bag as detailed above.
- Pinch off the end of the connecting tube if possible (avoid touching the end of the connecting tube).
- Remove the leg bag from the catheter.
- Remove the cap and insert the nozzle of the new leg bag into the catheter.

Disposal of your leg bag

At home:

- Dispose of the old bag by placing into a plastic bag and then into the dustbin. Do not burn on an open fire.
- Wash and dry hands

In hospital or care home:

- Dispose of in clinical waste.
- Wash and dry hands

About your Night Bag

Attaching the night bag

- Wash and dry hands.
- Remove the cap and insert the nozzle for the night bag into the tubing at the bottom of your leg bag (below the tap).
- Make sure the tap on the night bag is closed.
- Open the tap on the leg bag and loosen straps.
- Wash and dry your hands.
- The night bag holds more urine so you don't have to get up during the night.
- Put the night bag on the stand if available or place it in a bowl or bucket (use this for your night bag only).
- The night bag should be positioned below waist height to assist drainage.

Removing the night bag

- Close the tap on your leg bag.
- Disconnect the night bag from the leg bag.
- Empty the night bag
- Keep your night bag on the stand or in the basin until bedtime (drainable night bags are changed weekly)
- Wash and dry your hands.

Disposal of your night bag

At home:

- Dispose of the old bag by placing into a plastic bag and then into the dustbin. Do not burn on an open fire.
- Wash and dry hands

In hospital or care home:

- Dispose of in clinical waste.
- Wash and dry hands

Sex and catheters

Sex is possible if the following steps are taken before and after intercourse:

- both partners should wash their genital area.
- men can gently secure the catheter with tape along their penis and apply a condom. It may help to use water soluble lubrication
- women can tape the catheter out of the way towards the abdomen.

If you have any concerns relating to this please do not hesitate to contact your nurse or doctor for advice.

If you have a problem with your continence products please contact your Community Nursing Team.

Further useful information can be found at: www.nhsinform.scot

Further help and information

If you are experiencing continence issues, contact your GP or Community Nurse.

We are listening - how did we do?

We welcome your feedback, as it helps us evaluate the services we provide. If you would like to tell us about your experience:

- speak to a member of staff
- visit our website: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/feedback or share your story at: www.careopinion.org.uk or tel. 0800 122 31 35
- tel. 01851 708069 Monday-Friday between 9am-5.30pm.

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