

## **Care of Foley Catheter (Indwelling Urethral Catheter)**

A Foley Catheter is a tube that is put into the bladder to drain urine out of the body. A Foley catheter can stay in the bladder for hours or even weeks. If it is a long-term catheter it will need to be changed by medical personnel every 4-6 weeks. Your provider will tell you how long you will need to have the catheter and when it can be removed. When your provider gives the order for catheter to be removed, it will need to be removed by medical personnel (unless your provider gives you other instructions).

### **Having the catheter put in**

You will be asked to lie down.

The clinical staff will clean the skin around the opening where urine comes out of your body.

The catheter is put into the urethra, which is the opening to the bladder, and gently passed into your bladder.

When the catheter reaches the bladder, a small balloon at the tip is filled with sterile water. The balloon holds the catheter in place to keep it from coming out the bladder.

The catheter is connected to a closed system which includes the catheter tubing and collection bag.

The bag can either be a leg bag or a larger collection bag. The leg bag is connected to your thigh or lower leg with special straps. If you have a larger collection bag (sometimes referred to as a night drainage bag) there will be tubing from the catheter to the drainage bag and the tubing will be secured to your thigh with a special strap or other type of holder.

### **Care while you have the catheter**

Wash your hands with soap and water before and after caring for your catheter.

Clean the skin around the catheter each day and after every bowel movement. Always wash away from where the catheter enters the body.

Females should always wash from front to back.

Males should always wash from the tip of the penis down and to their backside. If he is not circumcised then he should pull back the foreskin & clean the area and then always make sure that the foreskin is pulled back forward over the penis.

Keep the urine bag below the waist level to prevent urine from flowing back into your bladder from the tubing and urine bag. Backflow of urine can cause an infection.

It may help to wear cotton or loose underwear to allow for air flow and help keep your genital area dry.

Maintain good hydration by drinking plenty of fluids and eating foods that have a lot of fluid in them, such as watermelon. Avoid dietary irritants: Caffeine, pickled, spicy, tomato based & citrus foods, artificial sweeteners, or alcohol, these can increase irritation in the bladder which in turn can cause more side-effects from the catheter.

Do not pull on the tubing and be careful when walking or moving so that you or someone else doesn't step or pull on the tubing. Make sure the tubing is secured to your leg. Be sure that the straps are not too tight. Tight straps may interfere with your blood circulation or may cause a blood clot in the lower leg.

Keep the bag below waist level. When getting into bed or laying down hang the urine bag beside the bed or on the frame of the bed. The catheter drains by gravity so the collection bag always needs to be lower than your waist/pelvis.

Keep the tubing free of bends & kinks as this can prevent urine from draining.

Only take the catheter and tubing apart to change the urine bag.

Avoid constipation as this can increase problems with the catheter. You should avoid having to strain to have a bowel movement as this can cause blood in the urine or increase bladder spasms.

### **How to clean around the Catheter**

Wash your hands with soap and water

Clean the skin near the catheter. Take a clean washcloth moistened with soap and water. Special soap is not required. Wash gently around the urinary opening where the catheter goes in. Hold the end of the catheter to keep it from being pulled. Wash around the catheter to remove any drainage. You should start where the catheter enters your body and clean down the catheter. Never clean the catheter from your bottom towards the entrance as it can increase your chances of getting an infection. Rinse using another clean washcloth moistened with water. Pat the area dry with clean towel. Don't apply powders or creams to area unless instructed by your provider.

You may shower while wearing the catheter. Sitting in a tub is not recommended.

You should clean after every bowel movement to prevent infection. Always wipe away from the urethra (opening to the bladder where tube enters).

Good personal hygiene prevents the accumulation of bacteria, reduces the risk of infection, and helps prevent odor.

Make sure the tubing & bag are secured after you have completed your hygiene.

### **Draining the collection bag**

Empty the bag at least three times a day. It should be emptied when it is 1/2 to 2/3 full. Catheter bags should never be allowed to fill up completely as this will increase the pressure on the catheter and cause irritation & tugging at the catheter's point of entry.

Wash your hands with soap and water. You can drain the urine into the toilet. Open the spigot at the bottom of the drainage bag. Make sure the spigot does not touch the toilet or anything else as this may contaminate the bag with bacteria. Use a gauze pad or cotton ball saturated with rubbing alcohol to clean the end of the spigot. Tightly secure the spigot to prevent the catheter bag from leaking.

Do not rest the catheter bag on the floor at any time.

You do not need to measure your urine output unless your caregiver instructs you to.

### **Changing and cleaning your urine bag**

Your urine bag and tubing will be changed by your caregiver when you have your catheter changed.

If you need to change your bag you will do the following. Get a new or clean leg bag or urine bag with tubing. Put a clamp on the catheter tubing near the end that connects to the urine bag tube. Remove the catheter from the tubing to the old bag. Clean the ends of the new bag tubing and catheter with alcohol before putting them back together. Connect the catheter to the new bag. Open the clamp on the catheter tubing. Rinse the old bag with warm soapy water and then rinse with plain water. Fill the bag with 2 parts white vinegar mixture to 3 parts water. Leave the water and vinegar mixture in the bag for 20-30 minutes. You may use chlorine bleach instead of the vinegar if desired. Empty and rinse the bag. Hang it upside down to let it air dry. Store the dry bag in a clean plastic bag. Never store an unclean or wet bag.

### **Problem Solving**

#### **If your catheter is not draining:**

Check to see if the tubing is twisted or bent.

See if you are lying or sitting on the catheter or tubing. Check the device that is used to secure the catheter tube to your skin to make sure it is not blocking the tube.

Make sure the urine bag is below waist level.

Contact your caregiver if urine is still not draining into the bag.

#### **If your catheter is leaking:**

Check all the connections and make sure they are all intact. Locate the area that is leaking to see if the tubing or drainage bag has a hole. If it does it will need replaced.

If urine is leaking around the insertion site and there is still urine going into the bag then the leakage may be due to bladder spasms. Bladder Spasms are contractions of the bladder which generate an urge to urinate and sometimes can be painful. This pain is sometimes described as a cramping or burning pain. Urine leakage may occur if the bladder spasms continue because the bladder will force urine out around the catheter.

### **Contact your provider if you have**

Symptoms of urinary tract infection:

- Fever, chills, back pain, urine has strong odor
- Bloody Urine
- No urine draining into the bag
- Catheter comes out or is leaking
- You have pain at the catheter site, lower back, or abdominal pain
- Fever of 100.5 or higher