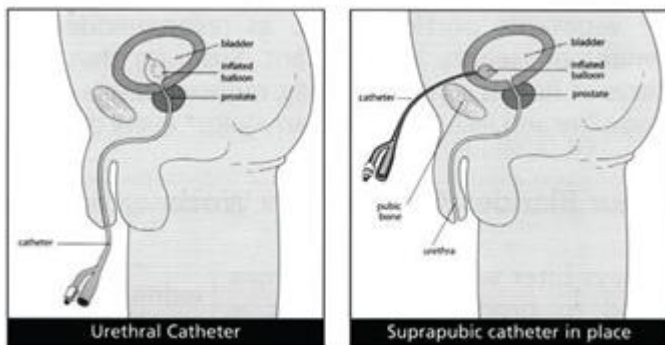


Looking after your catheter at home (Supra-pubic or urethral)

What is a catheter?

A catheter is a hollow tube placed into your bladder to allow urine to drain. Your doctor will have explained why you have a catheter in place. It may be due to:

- Being unable to pass urine
- To allow healing after urology surgery
- To help manage urinary incontinence
- To help prevent kidney problems



The urethral catheter is held in place by a balloon filled with water and sits at the base of the bladder. A supra pubic catheter is held in place by a balloon filled with water which rests against the wall of the bladder. The catheter will not fall out in normal use.

The catheter is attached to a drainage bag, which is attached to your lower leg.

What is a supra-pubic catheter?

A supra-pubic catheter is a tube which is inserted through the abdominal wall into the bladder to allow urine to drain. It is used for:

- Retention of urine, when it is not possible to pass a urethral catheter
- As a preferred alternative to urethral catheterisation
- As a method of bladder drainage for persons with spinal cord damage

- To allow healing after certain urinary or gynaecological surgery
- Following trauma to the penis

How long will the catheter last?

Most catheters are replaced regularly e.g. 6 to 12 weekly. This will vary with each person. The district nurse is available to help you manage your catheter at home and will arrange for your catheter to be replaced.

Equipment used with a catheter

Catheter valves

A catheter valve may be used instead of a leg bag. This valve needs to be opened every 3-4 hours to allow for normal filling and emptying of the Bladder. A night bag can be attached overnight.



Leave this valve open so urine can enter the night bag. Change the valve each week.

Drainage bags

Maintaining a secure closed system is the key to living successfully with your catheter.

There are two types:

Leg Bag (500-600ml capacity)



This small bag is attached to your catheter, and secured to your leg with straps. To help prevent bladder infection do not disconnect your leg bag from your catheter.

[continued]

The bag should only be disconnected once a week when a new bag is fitted.

The bag can be emptied using the drainage tap at the bottom of the bag. Empty the bag every 3-4 hours to stop it becoming over full.

Night Bag (2000ml capacity)

- The night bag connects to the bottom of your leg bag for an increased capacity overnight and allowing greater movement when in bed.
- Connect the fluted tip of the night bag into the bottom outlet of the leg bag.



- Open the clamp at the bottom of the leg bag when connecting the night bag to allow the urine to run freely into the night bag.
- When in bed the drainage bag must be lower than your bed to aid drainage.
- Change the night bag each week.

Caring for your catheter

In the morning - disconnecting and cleaning the night bag

- Close the leg bag bottom outlet and detach the night bag. empty the night bag contents into the toilet or suitable container
- Wash out the night bag with warm soapy water, then rinse and hang up to dry over a rail in the bathroom. When dry, store in a clean plastic sealed bag. Don't forget to recap the end of the bag to help prevent infection
- Throw away the night bag after one week.

Hygiene

- Wash your hands before and after emptying your drainage bags or any occasion when the catheter is handled. Carers need to wear disposable gloves
- Have a bath or shower every day if possible, paying special attention to the skin around the catheter. If you use soap, always rinse well, as the soap build-up can cause soreness or irritation
- Avoid creams or ointments around the catheter unless they have been prescribed by your doctor
- A good fluid intake is the best way to irrigate the bladder, promote good drainage, and reduce the risk of infection.

Diet and fluid intake

Constipation should be avoided, as this may interfere with the drainage of the catheter.

Try to have some fruit every day e.g. an unpeeled apple, a kiwifruit, an orange or add a little bran to your breakfast cereal. Choose wholemeal bread instead of white.

It is also important to drink plenty of fluid each day to help your catheter drain and reduce the risk of infection or blockage of the catheter by debris.

A high fluid intake is 2000mls or about 9-10 cups/glasses a day. Some medical conditions may not allow you to drink this much fluid. Your nurse or doctor will explain this for you.

Prevent “drag” or “pulling” on the catheter

The catheter is held in the bladder with a water filled balloon. Any pulling or tension on the catheter will cause discomfort and possible damage to the bladder, bladder wall, and urethra. It is possible to prevent pulling by:

1. Wearing the leg bag strapped to your leg during the day. This makes sure there is no tubing to trip over.

[continued]

2. Empty the leg bag every 3-4 hours to stop the bag becoming heavy.
3. A thigh strap to secure the catheter and prevent pulling particularly if you wear your catheter bag on your calf.

What if the catheter leaks?

Leakage of urine around the catheter is usually related to bladder spasms. These happen when the catheter irritates the bladder or if the bladder is not draining. These types of spasms commonly occur during the first 48-72 hours after the catheter is inserted, and usually disappear after this. The spasms can cause urine to leak around the catheter in small or large amounts, and you may have the urge to go to the toilet. If you experience a leakage, first look at the drainage system:

- Is the catheter securely connected to the leg bag?
- Are there any kinks in the drainage tubing?
- Has the drainage bag been kept lower than the bladder?

If the drainage system is fine and leakage small, or not very often, tell your district nurse know when they next visit.

If the leakage is persistent, painful or your catheter is not draining, call your district nurse or doctor (GP) promptly.

Recognising infection

With a catheter it is possible to get a urinary tract infection (UTI). This is because the catheter provides a direct route for bacteria to enter the bladder.

You can greatly reduce the chances of getting an infection by following the suggested guidelines – however sometimes an infection will still develop.

Things to watch for:

- Is your urine cloudy?
- Does it smell unpleasant or unusual?
- Have you got pain around the catheter, in the bladder or lower back?
- Do you feel hot, cold or shivery?
- Do you feel unwell?
- Is there blood in your urine?

If you have any of these signs or symptoms please contact your doctor (GP) promptly as this may indicate an infection. An untreated UTI can develop into a severe illness.

Can I still have sex?

The answer is yes, if you take following steps:

- Men can tape the catheter along their erect penis and apply a condom.
- The woman should take her catheter out of the way along her abdomen.
- Before intercourse, both partners should wash their genitals (private parts) thoroughly.
- It helps to use plenty of water-soluble lubrication, such as K-Y jelly, but not Vaseline
- After intercourse, both partners should wash their genitals thoroughly again.
- It may be necessary to find a new position which makes it comfortable for the partner with the catheter
- If your catheter is causing you problems during sexual intercourse, do not hesitate to discuss it with your nurse or family doctor (GP).

[continued]

Information for you, your family and whanāu

Should your catheter stop draining (blocks) and you are concerned or uncomfortable you need to seek urgent attention.

You can:

Monday to Sunday 8.00am - 9.00pm contact the District Nursing Service (details on page 4)

Or

Go to your GP after hour service in your area

- Wellington Accident & Urgent Care open until 11pm
- Kenepuru Accident & medical clinic open 24 hours 7 days a week
- Kapiti Team Medical open until 10pm

Or

Attend Emergency Department

Or

Call an Ambulance (if unable to get to Emergency Department yourself)

Information for your district nurse and family doctor

Date inserted: _____

Type of catheter: _____

Size of catheter: _____

Number of ml in balloon: _____

Balloon size: _____

Frequency of change: _____

Drainage bag (type) changed each week:

Date catheter changed: _____

Next change due: _____

Contacting the District Nurses

Hours: 8am - 9pm, Monday to Sunday

Please phone your area District Nurse

Wellington: (04) 806 2556

Kenepuru (04) 918 2011

Kapiti (04) 903 0224