

A suprapubic urinary catheter is a normal urinary catheter which is inserted into your bladder through a surgically made incision in the front of the abdomen (tummy).

Why do I need a Suprapubic catheter?

After surgery involving the bladder or urethra, a suprapubic catheter may need to be inserted into the bladder. This is to drain urine and to give your bladder a period of rest until the bladder is able to function normally again. The catheter is stitched in place so it will not fall out, and is connected to a urinary bag which collects the urine. You may have a dressing over the insertion site on your abdomen.

The tubing to the urine bag must be below the level of your bladder. This is so that urine does not drain back into your bladder putting you at risk of infection. The drainage bag should not touch the floor.

- The tubing needs to be free of kinks to enable the urine to flow easily.
- The drainage bag will need emptying when it is just over half full.
- The urine might initially be pink or blood stained. This is quite normal following your surgery.

According to the instructions of your surgeon, you will need to do a 'trial of void' – this is performed by your nurse who will clamp your catheter allowing your bladder to fill normally and then measure the urine you pass. Sometimes, in order to speed this process up, your nurse may fill your bladder for you with normal saline via the catheter,

your catheter will then be clamped and you will be asked to try to pass urine straight away and this will be measured.

Each time you pass urine, the catheter also needs to be unclamped and what is left in your bladder will drain and be measured. This is called "the residual" urine and it shows how well your bladder is functioning.

When you have had two residual measurements of less than 100mls and are passing good amounts of urine normally, your catheter can be removed.

If the residuals are more than 200mls your nurse will reconnect the catheter bag and try clamping the catheter again on another day. You may go home with your catheter and be given an appointment to return to the hospital for another 'trial of void'.

To help the catheter drain well, you need to drink 6-8 cups of fluid a day.

How do I keep the catheter clean?

To keep the area around the catheter clean, wash gently whilst showering and then pat dry with a clean towel. Do not use talcum powder or creams. Your nurse will check the catheter site for any signs of infection. A dressing to the catheter site will be applied if needed.

What happens if I am unable to pass urine?

Please don't be anxious and despairing if you are unable to pass urine the first time, this is fairly common. It will eventually resolve as the bladder regains its tone. Removing the catheter when you

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are unable to pass urine would cause you discomfort as the bladder would become overstretched causing pain. It is better to have a few more days resting your bladder and then try again.

You may need to go home with the catheter still in place. Your ward nurse will show you how to care for your catheter, and provide a booklet of instructions. Please don't hesitate to ask a member of our team if you have any questions or problems.

Going Home

Complications to look out for

We particularly want you to tell us if:

- You have increasing pain not controlled by pain relief
- You have a fever (temperature).
- Your wound where the catheter has been inserted is bleeding and will not stop.
- Your wound is red or warm to the touch.
- You have thick and/or smelly ooze from your wound site.
- You have heavy vaginal bleeding or unpleasant smelling discharge.
- You are constipated or your catheter bag is empty for several hours.
- You have on-going nausea (feeling sick) or vomiting.
- You notice one or both of your calf/s has become sore to touch, is red or there is an increase in size of your calf/s.

Discharge and Follow-up

Following your operation the doctor will tell you of their findings. Your discharge summary is provided to you and your GP. Please check your discharge summary for details of your follow-up appointment.

Most women do not have any problems following insertion of a suprapubic catheter.

If you have any concerns regarding your post operative recovery please contact the **Gynaecology Ward/Womens Health Assessment Unit on 04 8060740 (24 hour coverage)**.