

## Your diet and fluids

It is important to eat a balanced diet of fruit, vegetables and fibre to avoid constipation (difficulty or pain emptying your bowels). If your bowel is full, which happens when you are constipated, it can press on your bladder and reduce urine drainage, which may block the catheter.

Keeping hydrated is very important when you have a catheter. Try to drink at least one and a half to two litres per day (six to eight large glasses of fluid). This will help to prevent infections and flush out any debris in your bladder (provided you have not been advised by your doctor to restrict your fluid intake).

## When should I seek advice?

You should speak to your nurse or doctor if you experience any of the following:

- The catheter becomes blocked.
- If no urine has drained after three hours.
- If you develop lower abdominal pain and feel that you are unable to pass urine.
- If your catheter falls out.
- If your urine appears cloudy, has a strong smell, or feels as if it is burning and this does not improve after drinking more fluids

Darker urine may indicate dehydration if your urine gets darker then drinking more fluids can help prevent infection.

1	Hydrated
2	
3	
4	Dehydrated
5	
6	
7	Severley dehydrated
8	

## Smoking

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is a smoke-free organisation. You are not permitted to smoke or use e-cigarettes in any of the hospital buildings or grounds.

If you need this information in another format or language, please ask a member of staff to arrange this for you.

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# Urinary Catheter Care

Information for Patients, Relatives,  
Carers and Visitors

## What is a catheter?

A catheter is a hollow flexible tube which drains urine from your bladder. Urinary catheters may be inserted by one of two methods

- through your urethra (the tube through which urine passes), or
- through an incision which is made in your abdomen wall just below your belly button (umbilicus). Which is known as a supra pubic catheter

Once the catheter is correctly placed inside the bladder, a small balloon is inflated to prevent the urinary catheter from falling out. As urine drains from the kidneys into the bladder, it drains down the catheter into a drainage bag. The urine drainage bag can be worn attached to the leg (leg bag) or a larger bag on a stand (night bag).

You will no longer need to pass urine in the usual way when you have a catheter in place.

## Why do people need a catheter?

Many people need a catheter at some stage of their lives, either for a short or long period of time.

Normally we are aware of when we need to empty our bladder, and after passing urine the bladder is completely empty. Sometimes the bladder can't function normally; your bladder muscle may lose its normal tone and prevent you from

emptying your bladder completely. In men the prostate gland may enlarge as a man grows older and this enlargement can cause pressure on the urethra and prevent the bladder from emptying.

## Personal hygiene

It is important that you minimise the risk of developing an infection in your urinary system through good personal hygiene.

- Hands must be washed and dried thoroughly before and after emptying or changing a drainage bag.
- The area where the catheter enters your body must be washed with mild soap and water. This should be done at least daily (unless a supra pubic catheter has been inserted, then you may need to wear a dressing for the first 24-48hrs).
- If you are having a bath or shower, empty the bag, remove the supportive straps or sleeves, and bathe as normal. After bathing dry the bag well and re-apply the supporting straps or sleeve.
- Men should ensure that the foreskin on the penis is pulled back and the area under the foreskin is cleaned with soap and water, rinsed well and dried. The foreskin **must** then be replaced back over the penis.
- You should not use creams, or ointments (unless prescribed) or talcum

powder around the area as chemicals in these could damage the catheter.

## Your urinary drainage bag

Your catheter is attached to a urinary drainage bag. There are two types of drainage bags: those worn on the leg, either on the thigh or lower leg known as leg bags and larger bags referred to as night drainage bags. Leg bags are connected to your catheter and act as a container to collect the urine. These bags need to be emptied regularly.

You should aim to empty the bag when it is no more than half full, as this will minimise the risk of a heavy urine bag pulling on your catheter. It is important that the leg bag is well supported with elastic straps or supportive elastic sleeves. Where you position the leg bag depends on where feels comfortable for you. Most people prefer to wear the bag on their thigh as it can easily be disguised under clothing.

The further away the bag is placed from your bladder, the more risk of tissue damage caused by the catheter pulling.

You should also have been given a supportive strap which is worn on the thigh or on the abdomen to support the catheter itself. This may be a stick on type plaster device or an elasticised strap. This is used to promote comfort and reduce the risk of damaging your urethra (the tube to your bladder).