

# Topic Overview Urinary Catheter Care

A Urinary Catheter is a flexible plastic tube used to drain urine from the bladder when individuals cannot pass urine themselves. A doctor or Qualified Nurse will place the catheter into the bladder by inserting it through the urethra, the opening that carries urine from the bladder to the outside of the body. When the catheter is in the bladder, a small balloon is inflated to keep the catheter in place. The catheter allows urine to drain from the bladder into a bag that is usually attached to the thigh. Indwelling urinary catheters can be used in both men and women.

A catheter may be needed because of certain medical conditions, such as an enlarged prostate or the inability to control the release of urine, or after surgery on the pelvis or urinary tract. Urinary catheters are also used when the lower part of the body is paralyzed and individuals with limited mobility.

## Catheter care

Always wash your hands before and after handling your catheter. Follow all of the instructions from initial induction training, Also:

- Make sure that urine is flowing out of the catheter into the urine collection bag. Make sure that the catheter tubing does not get twisted or kinked.
- Keep the urine collection bag below the level of the bladder.
- Make sure that the urine collection bag does not drag and pull on the catheter.
- Unless you have been told not to, it is okay to shower with a catheter and urine collection bag in place.
- Check for inflammation or signs of infection in the area around the catheter. Signs of infection include pus or irritated, swollen, red, or tender skin.
- Clean the area around the catheter twice a day using soap and water. Dry with a clean towel afterward.
- Do not apply powder or lotion to the skin around the catheter.
- Do not tug or pull on the catheter.
- At night you may wish to hang the urine collection bag on the side of individual's bed.

## To empty the urine collection bag

You will need to empty the bag regularly throughout the day plus especially in the mornings and at bedtime. If you have been instructed to measure the amount of urine, do so before you empty the urine into the toilet, and log the amount emptied on an urine output chart.

- Wash your hands with soap and water. If you are emptying another person's collection bag, and always wear disposable gloves.
- Remove the drain spout from its sleeve at the bottom of the collection bag. Open the valve on the spout.

- Let the urine flow out of the bag and into the toilet or a container. Do not let the tubing or drain spout touch anything.
- After you empty the bag, wipe off any liquid on the end of the drain spout. Close the valve and put the drain spout back into its sleeve at the bottom of the collection bag.
- Wash your hands with soap and water.

## When to call a doctor ( then inform the office/on call)

Call the doctor if:

- No urine or very little urine is flowing into the collection bag for 4 or more hours.
- No urine or very little urine is flowing into the collection bag and you feel like your bladder is full.
- Individual is complaining of have new pain in their abdomen, pelvis, legs, or back.
- If the urine has changed colour, is very cloudy, looks bloody, or has large blood clots in it.
- The insertion site becomes very irritated, swollen, red, or tender, or you have pus draining from the catheter insertion site.
- The urine has a foul odour.
- Urine is leaking from the insertion site.
- Individual has a fever of 100.4 °F (38 °C) or higher, or they have severe back pain.
- If they develop nausea/vomiting or shaking chills.

## After catheter removal

If you are caring for individuals whom have recently had the catheter taken out:

- They may have trouble urinating. If this happens encourage them to try sitting in a few inches of warm water (going into a bath). This may help them relax. If they feel the urge, it may be easier to urinate while they are still in the bath.
- They may have some burning the first few times they urinate. If the burning lasts longer, it may be a sign of an infection.
- Encourage them to Drink plenty of fluids, enough so that the urine is light yellow or clear like water. If they have kidney, heart or liver disease and have to limit fluids, guidance may be required from their doctor before you increase the amount of fluids they drink.
- Encourage them to wear loose cotton underwear if they have irritation or a rash from the catheter site.

Also, it is important to know when individuals are having a problem and when to advice a visit from their doctor. After catheter removal,

Signs to look out for of when to call the doctor :

- They do not urinate within 8 hours after the catheter is taken out.
- They have a feeling of fullness or pain in your bladder or belly.
- They have signs of a urinary infection. For example:
- have blood or pus in your urine.

- have pain in your back just below your rib cage. This is called flank pain.
- have a fever, chills, or body aches.  
hurts to urinate.
- have groin or belly pain.