

How to Care for a Urinary Catheter

A urinary catheter is a thin flexible tube that drains urine from the bladder. It connects to a bag outside of the body.

Caring for a Urinary Catheter:

- Wash your hands before and after handling the catheter.
- Wash the skin around the catheter with soap and water each day. Rinse well. Pat the skin dry.
- Keep the catheter tube secure
- Keep drainage bag below waist level
- Drain urinary bag 3 times a day. You may empty the bag more frequently if it becomes halfway full.
- **DO NOT** get lotions or creams on the catheter tube
- **DO NOT** let the tube pull or catch when you move around
- **DO NOT** let the tube kink or loop
- **DO NOT** clamp the catheter or the catheter tubing
- **DO NOT** soak in a bath, hot tub, pool or other body of water while catheter is in place. Taking showers is okay.

Additional Care Steps:

- Wear cotton underwear
- Check regularly to make sure urine is in the bag
- If you do not see urine, change positions to help urine flow. If there is still no urine output:
 - Check tubing and catheter for kinks or loops
 - Check to make sure urine bag is below bladder level
- Drink plenty of fluids

When to Call the Doctor:

- Signs of infection include fever of 101.5F or greater, chills, pain around the catheter or in your back
- Urine has blood in it, is dark or coffee-colored, has sediment (visible particles or debris), or pus

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- The tube comes out or urine stops flowing into the bag.

Kenneth A. Hacker, MD, FACS • Laurel A. Yeager, MD, FACS • Jennifer L. Eting, MD, FACS • Jerad P. Miller, MD, FACS, FASCRS • Kurt Piening Jr, MD, FACS • Melissa Franke, FNP-C

70 Jungermann Circle, Suite 405 • St. Peters, MO 63376

636.916.7100 main • 833-660-3186 exchange • 636.916.7110 fax • www.benrussurgical.com • www.bjsph.org/Benrus