



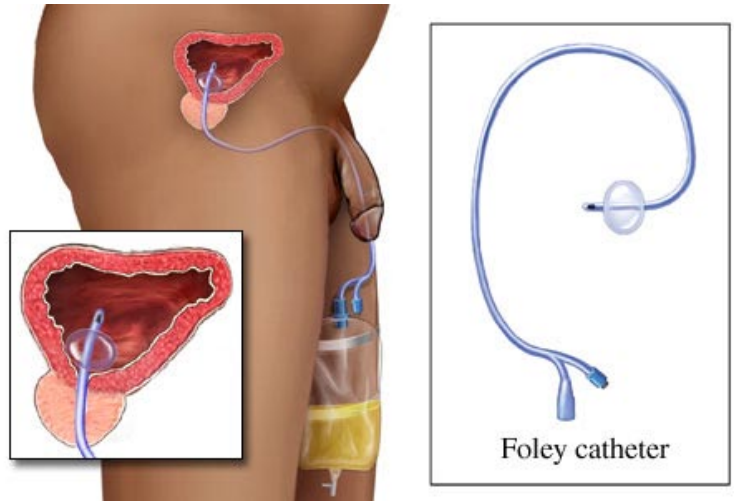
UROLOGY ASSOCIATES OF FREDERICKSBURG

Expert Surgical Care of the Urologic Patient Since 1975

Care for your Urinary Catheter

A urinary catheter is a flexible plastic tube used to drain urine from your bladder when you cannot urinate by yourself. A doctor 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. Once 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.

A catheter may be needed because of certain medical conditions, such as an enlarged prostate, 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.



Catheter care

Always wash your hands before and after dealing with your catheter.

- Make sure that urine is flowing out of the catheter into the drainage bag.
- Make sure the tube doesn't get twisted or kinked.
- Check the area around the urethra for inflammation or signs of infection, such as irritated, swollen, red or tender skin at the insertion site or drainage around the catheter.
- Keep the drainage bag below the level of the bladder.
- Make sure that the drainage bag does not drag and pull on the catheter.
- Unless you've been told otherwise, it's okay to shower with your catheter and drainage bag in place.
- Clean the area around the drainage tube twice a day, using soap and water. Dry with a clean towel afterward.
- Do not tug or pull on the catheter.
- Do not have sexual intercourse while wearing an indwelling catheter.
- You may wrap a small piece of gauze around the area where the catheter comes out of your body. Change the gauze if it feels wet. Use a new piece of gauze each time you clean your catheter.
- At night you may wish to hang the bag on the side of your bed.
- Do not allow the bag to pull on the catheter.



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Living with a catheter

Try to prevent constipation, and be sure you drink enough fluids. Most adults should drink between 8 and 10 glasses of water, noncaffeinated beverages, or fruit juice each day. Include fruits, vegetables, and fiber in your diet each day. Try a stool softener, such as Colace, if your stools are very hard.

Draining the urine collection bag

You will need to empty the bag regularly, whenever it is half-full, and at bedtime.

- Wash your hands with soap and water. If you are emptying another person's collection bag you may wish to wear disposable gloves.
- Unfasten the tube from the drainage bag.
- Fasten the tubing clamp and remove the drainage cap.
- Drain the urine into the toilet. Avoid touching the tubing or drainage cap on the toilet, the collection container, or the floor.
- If your health professional has instructed you to measure the amount of urine, do so before you have emptied the urine into the toilet.
- Replace the drainage cap, close the clamp, and refasten the collection tube to the drainage bag.
- Refasten the collection tube to the drainage bag.
- Wash your hands with soap and water.

When to call your surgeon

Call your surgeon 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.
- You have new pain in your abdomen, pelvis, legs, or back.
- Your urine has large blood clots in it.
- Your urine has a foul odor.
- You have a fever of 101° F or higher or back or flank pain.
- You develop nausea, vomiting, or shaking chills.