

Going Home with a Urinary Catheter ~ for a Woman ~

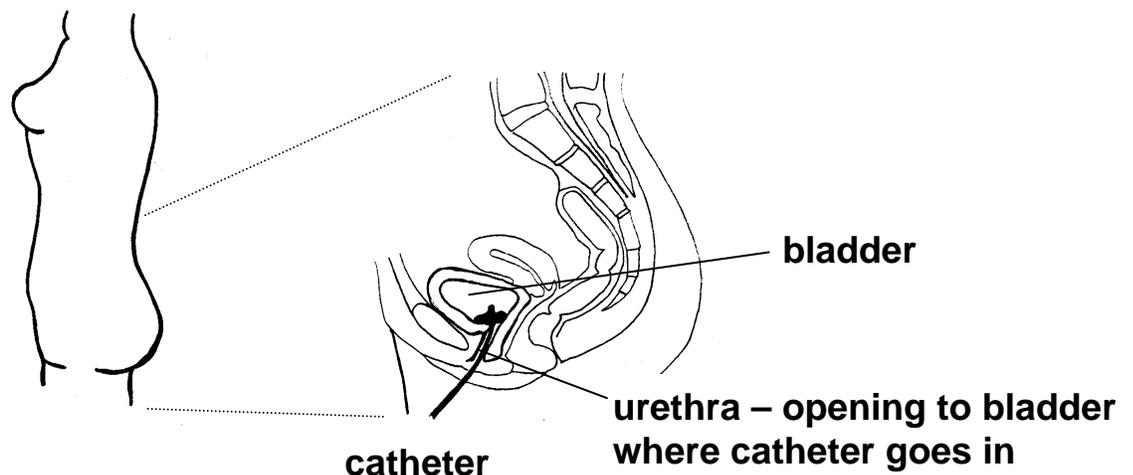
What is a urinary catheter?

A urinary catheter is a small tube that goes through your urethra into your bladder. The catheter drains the urine made by your kidneys.

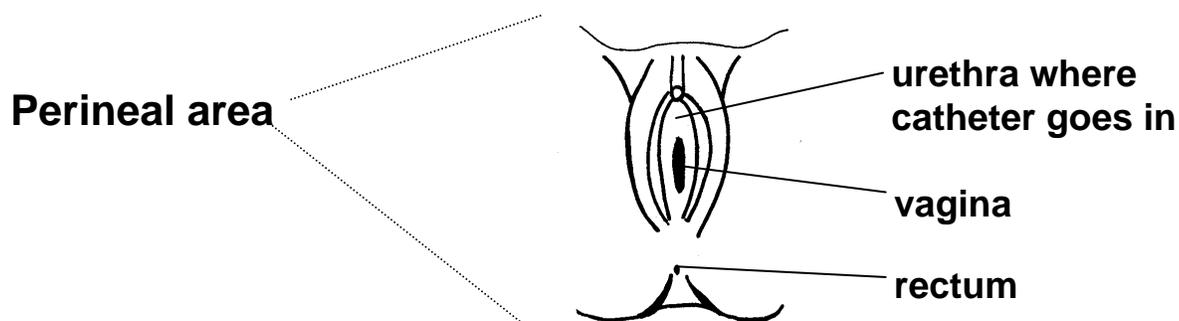
There is a small balloon at the tip of the catheter. This balloon stays in your bladder and holds the catheter in place. The catheter is connected to a plastic drainage bag that collects urine. The drainage bag can be a leg bag or a night bag.

You may go home with a urinary catheter while you wait for surgery or while you heal after surgery.

Side View of a Woman



Front View of Woman



What does a catheter feel like?

At first, you may feel like you have to urinate. You may have a burning feeling around your urethra.

Sometimes you may feel a sudden pain and have the need to urinate. You may also feel urine come out around the catheter.

This is caused by bladder spasms and you cannot control these. Make sure the catheter is not blocked and is taped properly. If the spasms continue, contact your doctor.

Before you go home

Your nurse will show you how to look after your catheter. If you feel comfortable, you may want to have another person in your family or a friend learn too. Your nurse will show you how to tape the catheter firmly so it does not pull when you walk. If the tape becomes loose, tape it again.

Wearing a drainage bag . . .

Leg Bag

During the day, you need to wear a leg drainage bag. This small bag fits around your leg with straps. Your nurse will show you how to put it on and empty it. Make sure you do not pull the straps too tight. This will block the blood flow in your leg. You need to have it firm enough to stay up.

When you wear a leg bag, you will connect a piece of tubing to the catheter called extension tubing. This allows the urine to drain as you move around doing your normal activities. The tubing helps maintain urine flow so the urine does not go back into your bladder when you are sitting. Your nurse will help you adjust the tubing to fit.

You only use extension tubing with the leg bag.

Night Bag

At night, you use a night bag. This bag is large enough to collect urine all night while you sleep. It hangs at the side of your bed. Your nurse will show you how to attach the night bag, empty it and tell you when to use it. Your nurse will give you a night bag to take home.

✘ Never sleep wearing a leg bag.

When your catheter is in, you may notice:

- tissue in your urine drainage bag
- blood around your urethra where the catheter goes in
- your urine has a pink colour from a little blood

These are all normal so do not worry.

How do I care for my catheter, bag and skin?

You can bathe at the sink or take a shower. Shower with your night bag on and then change to your leg bag after. **✘ Do not shower wearing the leg straps as they take a long time to dry.** Wearing wet straps may cause skin problems.

When menstruating, you can use pads or tampons if they feel comfortable. Change the pad or tampon often and clean your perineal area after each pad or tampon change.

To clean your perineal area:

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Using a clean washcloth, wash your perineum with unscented soap and water.
- Gently wash any dry drainage or blood from around the catheter
- Wash from front to back only.
- Rinse and dry gently
- Do this every morning, at bed time and when needed.
- Retape the catheter if it comes loose.

Drainage Bag Care:

Wash and rinse the drainage bag once a day:

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Wash the bag in the sink or tub using warm water and dish detergent.
- Rinse the bag well using warm running water.
- For control of odour, rinse the bag with a solution made of ½ water and ½ vinegar.
- Air dry the bag on a clean towel. You do not dry the inside of the bag.

To attach a drainage bag:

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Wipe the tips of the bag and the catheter with an alcohol wipe.
- Connect the tip of the catheter to the bag.

What can I eat or drink?

You can follow your usual diet. You should drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluids each day unless your doctor tells you not to. Fluids help keep the urine clear. If your urine is cloudy or strong smelling, drink more fluids.

What activity can I do?

You can do any activity that keeps the drainage bag below your bladder. **You cannot swim.**

When does the catheter come out?

Your doctor decides when the catheter comes out. This depends on the reason for your catheter.

After the catheter is taken out, you may notice:

- a burning feeling when you urinate
- you feel an urgent need to urinate
- some urine dribbling
- small bloody specks in your urine

These should improve as you recover. Call your doctor if you have any questions or concerns.