

Urinary Catheter Care at Home for Women

A urinary catheter (Foley) is a flexible plastic tube used to drain urine from your bladder when you cannot urinate by yourself. It is common to need a catheter for a few days after surgical procedures for the pelvic floor.

The **overnight bag** is a larger drainage bag that can hang over the bedside at night. It must be carried when you walk around (a shopping bag is ideal for this). For just a few days, this is all that you will need.

A **leg bag** is a smaller bag that is usually attached to the thigh. You can wear it under loose pants or a skirt for daily activities. For longer term use, a leg bag can give you more flexibility for daily activities.

Catheter care

- Always wash your hands before and after handling your catheter.
- 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 your bladder (below your hips)**.
- 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 your catheter and urine collection bag in place.
- Clean the skin 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.

To empty the urine collection bag

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- If your doctor has asked you to keep a record, measure the amount of urine in the bag before you empty it.
- 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.

Removing your catheter.

- An appointment will be made in the Urogynecology Department or in the Nurse Treatment Room in a few days.
- We will test how well you can empty your bladder. We will put about 10 ounces of sterile water into your bladder, remove the catheter and allow you to empty your bladder into a measuring hat.
- If you void the full 10 ounces, then we know that you can fully empty.
- If uncertain, we can perform a bladder scan to verify that your bladder is empty.
- If you can empty on your own, you no longer need a catheter.