

Foley Catheter: Home Instructions

What is a Foley catheter?

A Foley catheter (also called an "indwelling catheter") is a thin flexible tube used to drain urine out of your body. Urine normally drains from your body through your **urethra**. With a Foley catheter, a healthcare provider inserts the tube through your urethra to your bladder. After the catheter is inserted, a tiny balloon near the tip is inflated to keep the catheter from slipping out of your bladder.

Why do I need it?

You may need a Foley catheter if you can't control the flow of urine or can't urinate by yourself. This may happen if you have an infection, a swollen prostate gland, a reaction to a medicine, a disease or injury, or a recent surgery.

How will it be placed?

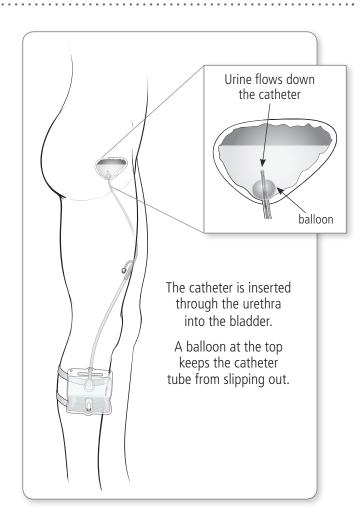
You will be given a catheter only when necessary, and it will be removed as soon as possible. The skin around the area of insertion will be thoroughly cleaned. The catheter will then be placed by a person specially trained to place it without introducing germs into your body. The insertion may feel uncomfortable.

Will the catheter be uncomfortable?

While you're wearing a catheter, you may feel as if your bladder is full and you need to urinate. You also may feel some discomfort when you turn over if your catheter tube gets pulled. These are normal problems that usually don't require attention. But if you feel burning, itching, or sharp pain, be sure to tell your healthcare provider.

How long will I need it?

How long you need your catheter depends on what type of illness or procedure you've had. If you'll need it for a long time, your healthcare provider will insert a new one once a month. The catheter will be removed if it is no longer needed.



Where do I keep the drainage bag?

Most people have two types of drainage bags. All bags should be kept below the level of your bladder.

- A leg bag is a smaller drainage bag that you attach to your leg with elastic bands. The strap should be against your leg and not pressing on the bag. Many people wear a leg bag during the day, because it fits discreetly under pants or skirts.
- A large bag (down drain) should be used when you're in bed. Hang it on the side of your bed, or put it in a basin on the floor. Never put the bag directly on the floor.

Catheter basics

One of your most important concerns is to keep yourself and your catheter free from germs that could cause infection. When you have a catheter, you can get a urinary tract infection (UTI) easily. Follow the instructions below and on the following pages to help prevent infection.

- Always wash your hands before and after handling your catheter.
- **Shower regularly**, but don't sit down in the bath tub with a catheter.
- Don't use lotions, creams, or ointments on the area around your catheter unless your healthcare provider tells you to.
- Wear cotton underwear. It keeps your skin drier.
- Drink extra fluids if your doctor says to. Extra fluids will keep urine flowing through your catheter and help prevent complications.
- Check for signs of infection, such as pain, swelling, or pus where the catheter enters the body. Signs of infection could also include pain in the abdomen, pelvis, legs, back or bladder. Call your healthcare provider if you have these symptoms.

Handling the bag and tube

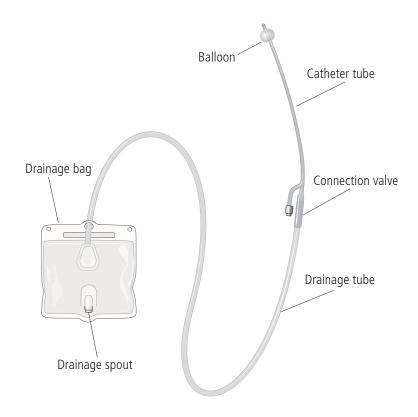
Be careful to not introduce germs into the catheter, and to make sure the urine can flow steadily into the bag.

- Keep the bag below the level of your bladder. This will keep urine from flowing back into your bladder and causing an infection.
- Arrange the tubing so it doesn't kink or loop. Urine needs to be able to flow freely into the bag.
- **Don't let the bag rest on the floor.** Keep all parts of the tubing and bag away from germs.
- **Don't puncture or cut the tube**. There should be no holes or breaks anywhere in the tube or bag.
- **Don't pull on the catheter** or try to remove it. Keep the drainage tube attached to your leg so it doesn't pull on the catheter.

Cleaning your catheter

Clean your catheter and the skin around it every day, including after every bowel movement. Follow these steps:

- **Gather your supplies:** a bowl of warm water, soap, a clean washcloth, and a waterproof pad or a towel to protect the area around you.
- Wash your hands with soap and water. Put the towel or pad underneath you.
- Clean the catheter tubing. Hold onto the catheter tubing so it doesn't accidentally pull out. Wipe away any crusty deposits that build up on it. Rinse well.
- · Clean the skin around the catheter.
 - With soap, water, and a clean wash cloth, wash the area where the catheter exits your body.
 Continue to wash in a circular motion, moving away from the catheter.
 - Remove any blood, crust, or mucus.
 - If you're a woman, always clean from front to back after going to the bathroom so you don't move germs from the anus to the urethra.
 - Rinse and pat the area dry.
 - Put the washcloth in the laundry and don't use it again until it's been washed.
- Secure the catheter and bag in place. Secure the drainage tubing to your leg with tape or a leg strap. If you're using a large bag, make sure it's securely attached to your bed. Allow some extra tubing to help keep the tube from pulling.
- Wash your hands again with soap and water.



When you're emptying, changing, and cleaning the drainage bag, it's important that no germs are allowed to enter the system.

Emptying the bag

Empty the bag every day, or anytime it's about half full.

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Get a container to empty the bag into, and put it beside you on the floor. Or, you can empty the bag into the toilet.
- **Remove the drainage spout** from its sleeve at the bottom of the bag. Be careful not to touch the tip of the spout.
- Open the valve on the spout and let the urine drain into the container or toilet. Don't let the drainage spout touch anything.
- When the bag is empty, clean the end of the drain spout with an alcohol wipe. Close the valve and put the spout back in its sleeve.
- Wash your hands again with soap and water.

Changing and cleaning the bags

If you wear a leg bag during the day, change to a large drainage bag when you go to bed. When you get out of bed, you can change back to a leg bag if you prefer. Each time you change bags, clean the one you're not using and hang it to dry.

Follow these steps when you change bags:

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- **Gather your supplies:** a clean bag, some alcohol wipes, and an irrigation syringe.
- **Disconnect the catheter tube** from the drainage tube at the connection valve. Make sure that neither of the tubes touches anything.
- Clean the end of the catheter tube with an alcohol wipe. With another alcohol wipe, clean the end of the drainage tube of the clean bag.
- Attach the catheter tube to the drainage tube of clean bag.
- Using an irrigation syringe, fill the used bag with 1 part white vinegar to 3 parts water. Leave the mixture in the bag for at least 20 minutes.
- **Empty and rinse the bag,** and hang it with the valve open so it will dry.
- When it's dry, store the bag in a clean plastic bag until you need to use it again.
- Wash your hands again with soap and water.

What if I have problems?

If your catheter is not draining:

- Check to see if the tubing is twisted or kinked.
- Make sure the bag is below the level of your bladder.
- Make sure you're not lying on the tubing or that it's not pressed between your thighs.
- Check to see if the tubing is clogged with blood or sediment.

When should I call my healthcare provider?

Be sure to ask your healthcare provider when you should return for a follow-up appointment. Contact your healthcare provider right away if:

- You can't get your catheter to drain into the bag. If very little urine has drained into the bag for 6 to 8 hours, or if your bladder feels full.
- Your catheter is leaking, or urine is leaking from the insertion site. Your catheter may be blocked and need attention. Call your healthcare provider right away, even if it's not during business hours.
- Your catheter comes out. If this happens, place
 a towel or waterproof pad underneath you to protect
 the bed or chair. Don't try to put the catheter back in
 yourself. Call your healthcare provider during regular
 business hours.
- You have pain, swelling, or pus draining where the catheter enters your body.
- You have new pain in your abdomen, pelvis, legs, or back, or you have a burning sensation in your bladder.
- Your urine has changed color, is red or pink (from blood), or is thick or cloudy.
- Your temperature is over 101° F (38.3° C).
- · Your urine has an unusually bad odor.
- · You have nausea, vomiting, or chills.

If you have other problems or concerns that may be related to your catheter, call your healthcare provider during regular business hours.

Name _		
Phone_		