

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Caring for your indwelling urinary catheter

An indwelling urinary catheter is one that is left in the bladder. This leaflet explains how to care for your catheter and how to deal with any problems that may arise.

The risk of urine infection

Having a catheter increases your risk of getting a urine infection as it is easier for bacteria to enter the bladder. Urine infections can be serious and difficult to treat. Drinking plenty of fluids can help prevent infections but you can also reduce the risk of urine infections in the following ways:

1. Hand washing

You or your carer should always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before and after dealing with your catheter and drainage bag. Carers should also wear a new pair of disposable gloves each time.

2. Keeping clean

Wash the area where the catheter enters your body every day with mild soap and water. Wash the area after you have opened your bowels and if the area gets dirty. Avoid using talcum powder or creams. Have a daily shower or bath if possible.

3. Emptying your leg bag

Do not let your leg bag get too full and heavy as it will pull. Empty your bag when it is two thirds full into a clean toilet, jug or urinal.

4. Changing your leg bag correctly

Only change your leg bag every seven days, or if it gets dirty or damaged. When changing the leg bag avoid touching the tip of the tube which gets pushed into the catheter. **NEVER** reuse a leg bag after it has been removed.

5. Connecting and disconnecting your night bag correctly

This helps reduce the risk of urine infections. Avoid touching the tip of the night bag tube which gets pushed into your leg bag.

If you use a re-usable night bag, after you have emptied it:

- Wipe the end of the tube with a clean cloth.
- Replace the dust cap over the tube end.
- Store the night bag in a clean, cool and dry place.
- Change it every seven days or if it gets dirty or damaged.

Possible problems – what to do

Your catheter is not draining:

- Check the tubing is not kinked or squashed.
- If possible try changing your position or walking about.
- Check your drainage bag which may be full and need emptying.
- If it is not draining contact your community nurse.

Your catheter is leaking (bypassing) where it enters your body:

- Check the tubing is not kinked, pulled or squashed.
- If possible try changing your position or walking about.
- If leaking is an ongoing problem please contact your community nurse.

Your catheter gets pulled out or falls out:

- Contact your community nurse.

If you feel unusually unwell it is possible you may have a urine infection. Please contact your nurse or doctor if you have any of the following symptoms:

- A fever.
- Pain near your bladder or lower back pain.
- Blood in your urine.
- Unusual confusion.
- Unusual tiredness.
- Feeling like you want to vomit or you are vomiting.

Contact details

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact one of your nurses:

- Urology Outreach on 01623 622515, extension 2429.
- Ward 32 on 01623 622515, extension 4140 (for advice only).

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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