

# Going Home with a Urinary Catheter



## What is a urinary catheter?

A urinary catheter, also called a **Foley catheter**, lets urine drain from your bladder. A small balloon on the catheter holds it inside your bladder. Urine flows from your bladder through the catheter into a collection bag.

After surgery, it can take time for your bladder to work properly. While your bladder recovers, the catheter will empty your urine into a bag.

While you have a catheter, drink 8 to 10 glasses (2-3 litres) of fluids every day. If you have fluid restriction, or heart or kidney problems, ask your doctor how much fluid you should drink.

Try to avoid fluids and food that can irritate the bladder like caffeine (tea and coffee), carbonated beverages (soda drinks), chocolate, and alcohol.

## Caring for your catheter

- Always wash your hands with soap and water for at least 30 seconds before and after you touch the catheter.
- Avoid twists or kinks in the tubing that can stop urine from flowing into the bag.



- Always keep the drainage bag below your bladder so the urine can flow in. Never let the drainage bag touch the floor.
- Always attach the catheter tubing to your thigh. Keep it in the securement device from the hospital. If it comes loose, tape it to your thigh.

## Emptying the urinary bag

Empty the bag when it is 1/3 to 1/2 full. Never touch the drainage spout or let the spout touch the toilet, measuring container or the floor. To empty the bag, go to a toilet and follow these steps:

1. Wash your hands well using soap and water for at least 30 seconds.
2. Pull the spout out of the holder on the bag.
3. Point the tip of the spout into the toilet (or measuring container if needed).
4. Open the stopper on the spout. Urine will flow out of the spout.
5. When nothing more comes out, close the stopper. Put the spout back in the plastic holder.

## Getting ready for bed

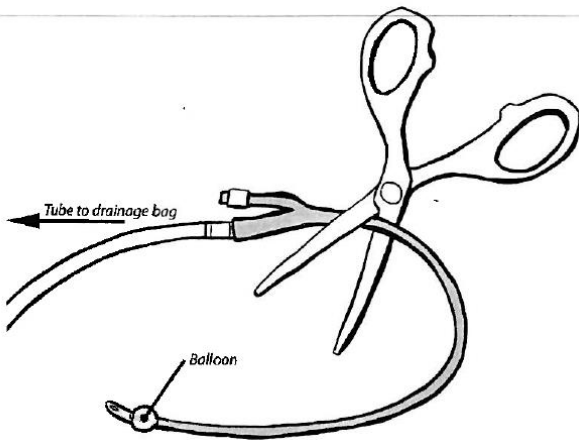
Before you go to sleep for the night, do the following steps:

1. Empty your urinary bag.
2. Arrange the drainage tubing so that is straight. Undo any kinks or loops.
3. Use the hooks on the bag to hang it on your bed. Or place the bag on a chair or stool beside your bed.
4. Ensure the bag height is below your bladder, so urine can drain.
5. You should not need to wake up at night to empty the bag. It holds a few litres of urine.
6. Empty the bag when you wake up in the morning.

## Taking out the catheter

If your doctor or nurse told you to take out the catheter, follow these steps:

1. Wash your hands well using soap and water for at least 30 seconds.
2. Empty the urine from the bag into the toilet.
3. Sit on the toilet.
4. Cut the catheter tube about 15cm (6 inches) away from you or where marked by your nurse.



5. Point the cut end of your catheter down and into the toilet. Water will flow out of the tube as the tiny balloon inside your bladder deflates.
6. When the water stops flowing, gently pull the catheter out. It should come out easily.
7. Put the catheter and drainage bags in the regular garbage.
8. Wash your hands with soap and water.

**Take out your catheter on the morning of:**

If the catheter does not come out easily, **stop**. Do not force it. Phone your surgeon's office. They will tell you what to do next. It is safe to keep the catheter in while you contact your surgeon.

## After You Take Out the Catheter

- You may feel some burning or stinging when you pass urine. This will get better with time.
- You may see some blood in your urine. This is normal and will go away in 1-2 days.
- Drink 8-10 glasses (2-3 litres) of fluids every day. If you have fluid restrictions, or heart or kidney problems, check with your doctor about how much you should drink.



**Contact your Gynecologist or go to Emergency if you:**

- Have blood in your urine that is increasing or lasts longer than 1-2 days.
- Have urine that looks cloudy or smells bad.
- Have a fever or chills.
- Have severe pain that does not improve with pain medication.
- Do not see urine draining into your bag for a few hours, even though you are drinking lots of fluids.
- Are unable to urinate for 8 hours after removing the catheter, even though you are drinking lots of fluids.

**DO NOT go to the Urgent Care Centre at BC Women's as it is ONLY for pregnant patients.**