

Urinary catheter insertion

The purpose of this leaflet is to explain your catheterisation procedure; understanding what to expect can help ease any concerns you may have. If you have any questions after reading this leaflet, please ask your nurse or doctor.

What is catheterisation?

Catheterisation involves inserting a tube (catheter) into the bladder to drain urine. Generally, catheterisation helps in situations where you can't urinate on your own (urinary retention), during or after surgery, or when urine output needs to be monitored.

How to prepare for your procedure

- Dress comfortably; wear loose clothing for convenience.
- Try to urinate beforehand to empty your bladder.
- Your doctor and/or nurse will explain the procedure and ask for your consent. They will also check whether you have any allergies, such as an allergy to latex.

What happens during the procedure?

A trained nurse or doctor will carry out the catheterisation with a chaperone present. It is an aseptic (sterile) procedure carried out using a lubricating gel to make the process more comfortable. The procedure usually takes 5–15 minutes. You will be kept informed throughout, and it can be paused or stopped if you feel uncomfortable.

Post procedural care and tips

The nursing staff will handle most aspects of catheter care while you are in the hospital. However, it is important to understand the basics, especially if the catheter will remain in place after discharge.

- If you feel any discomfort let your nurse know immediately.
- Ensure the urine bag is hanging below the level of your bladder at all times, even when you're in bed or sitting in a chair. This prevents urine from flowing back into your bladder.
- Check that the catheter tube is not twisted or blocked. If it is, alert your nurse immediately so they can adjust it.
- When moving in bed or getting up, be cautious of the catheter tube to avoid discomfort or accidentally pulling it.
- Call for assistance if you need to move, go to the bathroom, or reposition yourself.

- Notify your nurse if you experience any of the following:
 - Fever or chills.
 - Pain or burning in your lower abdomen.
 - Cloudy, foul-smelling urine.
 - Blood in the urine.

Your nurse will regularly check for signs of infection, but if you feel unwell, let your nurse know.

If your catheter is only temporary, your nurse will safely remove it when it is no longer needed. Inform them if you feel any discomfort during removal.

If you are to be discharged home with an indwelling catheter, then you should be provided with a **catheter passport**. The catheter passport provides essential information on catheter care and management, helping you to understand how to look after your catheter at home.

Upon discharge with a catheter, a referral for TWOC (Trial Without Catheter)/catheter change appointment will be sent to Urology/District Nurses.

Common problems associated with catheter

- **Bladder spasms** which feel like stomach cramps, sometimes associated with feeling of wanting to pass urine is common when you have a catheter in your bladder. The pain is caused by the bladder trying to squeeze out the balloon that holds the catheter in place.
- **Leakage around the catheter** is another common problem associated with indwelling catheters. This can happen as a result of bladder spasms or when you strain. Leakage can also be a sign that the catheter is blocked, so it's essential to report to have this checked by your nurse.
- **Blood or debris in the catheter tube** is also common with an indwelling catheter. Sometimes caused by the trauma of catheterisation. This could become a problem if the catheter drainage system becomes blocked.
- **Urinary tract infections (UTIs)** - symptoms include pain, burning during urination, or cloudy urine.

Less common potential problems

- Urethral injury, urethral scarring, bladder stones

What should I do if I do not pass urine or if I find my abdomen (tummy) distended?

If your catheter is not draining and your tummy feels swollen, uncomfortable, or painful, this may be a sign that your catheter is blocked. If this happens, you should go straight to your nearest Emergency Department (A&E).

Further information

- **NHS Website** www.nhs.uk/conditions/urinary-catheters

Useful contact details

East and North Hertfordshire Teaching NHS Trust:

- Website www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk
- Telephone 01438 314333

Urology Nurses, Lister Hospital:

- Telephone 01438 284356
- Email - urologynurselister.enh-tr@nhs.net

Leaflet information

**You can request this information in a different format or another language;
please speak to your doctor or nurse.**

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