

## Discharge information for patients with a catheter.

### **What is a catheter?**

A catheter is the tube inserted into your bladder to allow urine to drain. It is held in place with a water filled balloon which rests at the base of the bladder. The catheter is connected to a drainage bag. The tap at the bottom of the bag allows you to empty it.

Your doctor will have discussed with you the reason for the catheter and how long it will remain in. It may have been inserted for one of the following reasons.

- Retention of urine - you were unable to pass urine or empty the bladder fully.
- To allow for healing after certain surgery to the urinary system.
- For the management of urinary incontinence.

You will be given a leg bag (daytime) and a night bag (large capacity). The daytime drainage bag should be changed every 2 weeks. The night time bag once a week.

### **Hygiene**

It is normal to experience some urethral discharge while you have the catheter in place. You may need to use a pad to protect your underwear.

Wash your hands before and after emptying the drainage bag.

Have a daily shower, taking particular care to clean around the catheter. If you use soap, always rinse well. You will need to wash more frequently if you have any discharge/mucous from the penis. After showering, gently pat dry the catheter and bag.

Do not use creams or ointments around this area unless they have been prescribed by your doctor.

### **Daytime care**

Wear the leg bag during the day. Strap it comfortably to your thigh or calf depending on the length of the drainage tube to the bag. Empty it regularly so it does not become too full and heavy.

### **Overnight Drainage**

The larger capacity night bag connects at the tap of the day bag. You will be shown how to do this - make sure you remove the protective cap first.

It is important to check that the tubing does not kink or the urine will be unable to drain. Once you have connected the night bag to the day bag, make sure you open the tap from the day bag and position the night bag lower than your bed.

### **Cleaning the Drainage Bag**

After you disconnect the night bag, it needs to be emptied, cleaned and stored in a dry place. Clean it with warm soapy water (eg dishwashing liquid) , rinse with clean water, pat dry and place

in a clean towel in the hot water cupboard. A funnel makes washing and rinsing the inside of the bag easier.

### **Leaking around the catheter.**

Some people experience bladder spasms. These occur because the catheter irritates the bladder. Bladder spasm may cause leakage, discomfort and the feeling that you need to pass urine. Panadol may help the discomfort, but if it continues to be troublesome you should contact our rooms, your District nurse or GP. Leakage may also occur if the catheter is not draining. Always check that the tubing is free of kinks and the urine is draining.

### **Fluid intake**

You are advised to drink at least 2 litres of fluid a day - about 12 cups.

A high fluid intake will promote catheter drainage and reduce the risk of infection or blockage of the catheter.

### **Infection**

A complication associated with a catheter is infection. You can reduce the risk of infection by following the previous guidelines.

You should contact your GP if you have symptoms such as:

- Fever, shivering or chills
- Pain in the bladder or back
- Urine is cloudy or has an offensive odour

### **General advice**

Take care to prevent 'pulling' on the catheter - this will cause discomfort and trauma to the bladder and urethra.

If the catheter is not draining, first check the tubing is not kinked. If there is no drainage and you feel your bladder filling, especially if the urine is bloodstained, you should phone our rooms or your GP promptly. Sometimes the catheter can become blocked by debris or blood clot.

It is not uncommon to have varying amounts of blood in your urine for some time if you have had surgery to this area. This may be worse after your bowels are open or after exercise and should clear with extra fluid intake.