



The Clatterbridge
Cancer Centre
NHS Foundation Trust

A decorative graphic on the left side of the page, consisting of three concentric purple arcs of varying radii, resembling a stylized smile or a partial rainbow.

Urinary Catheter Passport for patients

A horizontal purple bar with a white text label.

Nursing

A rounded purple bar with white text.

A guide for patients and visitors

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This information leaflet is for patients who need to have a urinary catheter inserted. It gives advice and guidance about what to look for and who to contact if you have any problems. Whenever you need to see healthcare staff, please make sure that you have this leaflet with you.

Why people need a urinary catheter

A urinary catheter helps people who can not control or have difficulty emptying their bladder. Sometimes a urinary catheter may be required to closely monitor urine output or help with treatment and/or related side effects.

How your bladder and kidneys work

Kidneys filter waste products from the blood stream to produce urine. The urine passes into the bladder by means of a tube from each kidney. When the bladder empties, urine passes out of the body via the urethra.

If the bladder does not work properly, sometimes urine can be left behind. If the urine is not removed, it can become stale and may cause infection, discomfort and in extreme cases can cause excess pressure on the kidneys.

What is a catheter?

A urinary catheter is a hollow, flexible tube which drains urine from your bladder. This type of catheter may be placed through the natural opening into the bladder (urethra) or through a small incision made below the belly button. Once the catheter is correctly placed inside the bladder, a small balloon at one end is inflated to prevent the catheter from falling out. Urine will drain automatically from the bladder through the catheter into a drainage bag.

Drainage bags

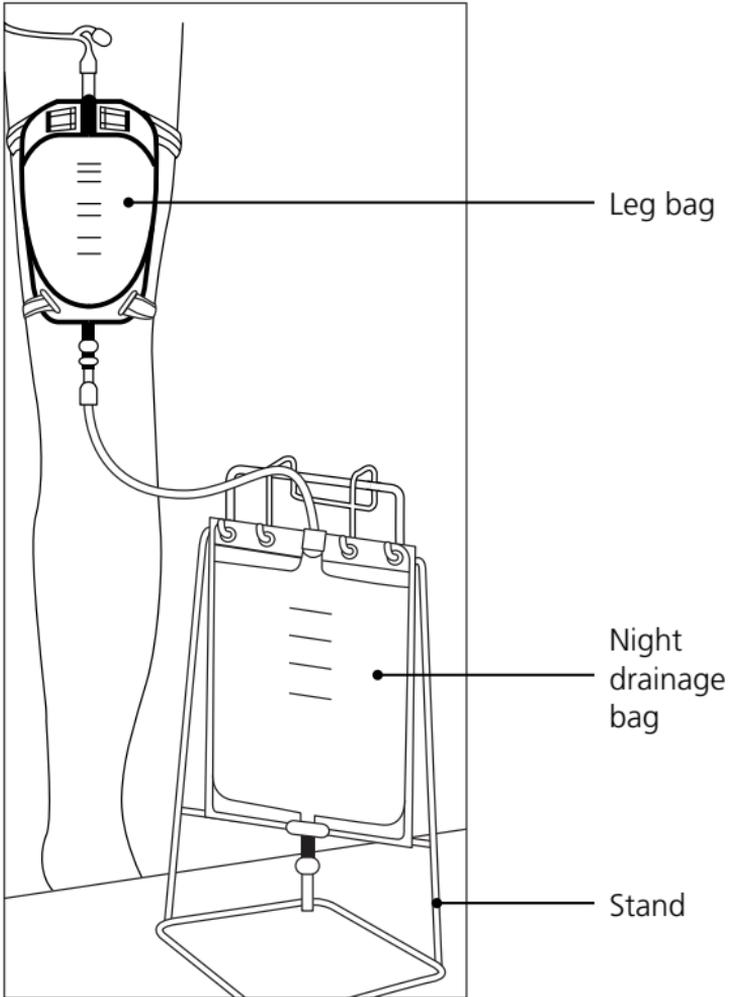
Your catheter is attached to a bag that acts as a container to collect your urine. The two main types of drainage bags are:

- Leg bags (worn on the leg, either on the thigh or calf)
- Overnight drainage bags also called bed bags (used to collect larger amounts of urine overnight)

It is important that catheter bags are well supported and do not drag on or pull the catheter. Leg bags are held in place by elastic straps or sleeves. This type of bag will need to be emptied regularly as soon as it is approximately half full.

Bed bags or overnight drainage bags may be connected to the bottom of your leg bag to collect larger volumes of urine





overnight. To allow the urine to drain freely overnight, the leg bag tap must be left in an open position while the overnight bag is attached. It is important to close the tap before the overnight bag is disconnected.

Please be extra careful emptying your catheter bag if you have had recent chemotherapy and clean up any spills immediately.

Personal care

Having a urinary catheter can sometimes make you more susceptible to a urine infection, so it is important to take extra care to help to keep your bladder and bowels healthy and to keep the catheter and surrounding area clean.

- Always wash your hands before and after changing and emptying drainage bags
- Wash the area where the catheter enters the urethra twice a day, using soap and water and dry thoroughly
- It is particularly important to wipe your bottom from front to back so that the germs that can cause infection are not transferred from the bowel towards the bladder. Wash the area where the catheter enters the urethra after bowels have been opened



- Keep the drainage bag below the bladder, this prevents urine backflow
- Keep the tube straight, kinks in the tube can cause urine back flow in to the bladder
- Do not allow the catheter drainage bag to touch the floor
- Drink at least 10 cups/day approximately 2 litres of water/ juice a day, as diluted urine reduces bacteria growth in the bladder
- Eat a high fibre diet as this helps prevent constipation
- Do not use creams or talcum powder near the catheter unless they've been prescribed

What happens when I go home?

If you need to go home with your catheter still in place, the nurses will make sure you know how to look after it. When you leave hospital you will be given a small supply of equipment, enough to last for seven days. The hospital staff will also contact the equipment suppliers to organise future deliveries and will refer you to the district nurses to arrange for them to visit you at home.

Can I have sex with a catheter in place?

Many men and women continue to have an enjoyable sex life while a catheter is in place. Wash the genital area before and after sexual intercourse.

- Women should tape the catheter out of the way along the abdomen
- Men can tape the catheter along the penis and apply a condom

A different type of catheter (suprapubic catheter) can be considered for those with an active sex life.

Asking for help

There is a Troubleshooting guide in this leaflet but there are also lots of people you can ask for help. If you are still in hospital, please let the nursing or medical staff know about any problems.

If you are at home, you should normally contact your GP or your district nurses but if you have recently had chemotherapy or are currently receiving treatment at The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre you should contact The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre Hotline **0800 169 5555**.

Your call will be answered by a dedicated nurse advisor. This line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



Troubleshooting

If urine stops draining into the bag

This can sometimes be caused by dehydration or constipation but may be a sign of something more serious. Make sure you are drinking enough liquid (10 cups/day this is approximately 2 litres) and eating a healthy diet including 5 portions of fruit or vegetables.

Also check that:

- The tubing is not kinked or blocked
- The drainage bag is connected correctly and does not need emptying
- The drainage bag is below the level of your bladder especially if you're sitting in a low chair

Ask for help if:

- If the catheter is blocked
- If there's still no urine in the bag after 2-3 hours
- If you develop lower abdominal pain or feel that your bladder is full
- If urine is leaking out around the catheter

Urine is suddenly discoloured or blood stained

Discoloured urine may be simply because you're not drinking enough liquid or because of something you have eaten. Some medications (including chemotherapy), certain foods or dyes in food can cause quite startling colours in urine including: brown, orange, pink, red, blue or green.

Slightly blood stained urine may have happened because of a small injury to your bladder and may be nothing to worry about. Heavily blood stained urine may indicate a more serious bleeding caused by very low platelets which can occur after chemotherapy.

Make sure you're drinking enough liquid (10 cups/day this is approximately 2 litres).

Also check that:

- The problem is not a simple side effect of your medication
- You have not recently eaten food known to colour urine

Ask for help if:

- You are worried about the colour of your urine
- Your urine is very blood stained (looks like blood rather than slightly pink or rose coloured)

Urine is cloudy or has a strong smell and feels as if it is 'burning' or painful

These signs can indicate that you are not drinking enough fluid but may be a sign of a urinary infection.

First drink more fluids (approximately 5 cups = 1 litre).

Ask for help if:

- Drinking more fluids has not helped or if you develop a temperature above 38°C

Catheter becomes dislodged or has fallen out

Ask for help

You have a high temperature (above 38°C)

Ask for help

Date	
Type of catheter	
Size	
Batch number	
Expiry date	
Reason for catheter change	
Problems	
Date of next planned change	
Signature	

Date	
Type of catheter	
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Batch number	
Expiry date	
Reason for catheter change	
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How we produce our information

All of our leaflets are produced by staff at The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre and this information is not sponsored or influenced in any way. Every effort is made to ensure that the information included in this leaflet is accurate and complete and we hope that it will add to any professional advice you have had. All our leaflets are evidence based where appropriate and they are regularly reviewed and updated. If you are concerned about your health in any way, you should consult your healthcare team.

We rely on a number of sources to gather evidence for our information. All of our information is in line with accepted national or international guidelines where possible. Where no guidelines exist, we rely on other reliable sources such as systematic reviews, published clinical trials data or a consensus review of experts. We also use medical textbooks, journals and government publications.

References for this leaflet can be obtained by telephoning 0151 556 5570.

If you need this leaflet in large print, Braille, audio or different language, please call 0151 556 5570.

If you have a comment, concern, compliment or complaint, please call 0151 556 5203.

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