

## Patient information

### **Caring for your Catheter at Home Following Prostate Surgery**

#### Urology Department

**You have had a catheter put into your bladder to drain urine. This leaflet explains how to care for your catheter when you get home.**

#### **General information about your catheter**

A catheter is inserted into the bladder through the urethra which runs through the length of the penis and allows the bladder to heal to the urethra following surgery.

In general it will stay in place for ten to twelve days, but can be longer if the connection between the bladder and urethra needs additional healing time. You will be told exactly when to have the catheter removed.

Your catheter is a tube and is held in place by a small water filled balloon which stops it from falling out.

The catheter drains into a bag, which you can either carry or attach to your leg. There is a small tap at the bottom of the bag, from which the bag can be emptied.

**It is critical that your catheter stays in place during the healing phase.**

#### **In hospital**

The ward nurses will supply you with leg bags, overnight bags and a leg strap before you go home. If you run out please ring the ward to arrange further supplies.

Once home the ward staff will routinely contact you in three to four days to see if you have seen the district nurse, have a date for removal of catheter and answer any concerns you may have. In the meantime if you have any worries contact the ward.

#### **Leg bags and overnight bags**

You should change the leg bag every five – seven days. When changing your leg bag, hygiene is very important, as you do not want to introduce germs into the system.

You should wash your hands thoroughly before and after. Nothing should touch the connecting ends of your catheter and the leg bag.

We recommend you use each overnight bag only once and then dispose of it. This will reduce the risk of introducing germs back into your catheter, which may have contaminated the bag.

You should preferably use a non-drainable, disposable bag. The drainage bag connects easily to the end of the leg bag and the tap on the leg bag is then left in the open position.

### **Disposing of the night bag**

Tear open as shown indicated on the bag, empty the bag into the toilet and put it into your household bin. Make sure you wash your hands thoroughly before and after.

### **Hygiene**

You should clean the area around where the catheter enters your body once or twice a day with warm water. You can have a bath or shower with your catheter in place but just ensure the drainage bag stays below the level of your hip.

### **The colour of your urine**

Urine should be a pale yellow colour. Drinking one to two litres (two to four pints) of fluid each day will help your urine flow and prevent infections occurring.

If your urine contains debris, becomes cloudy or dark yellow or develops an offensive smell, you may have an infection. You should increase your fluids and see your family doctor (GP) as soon as possible so you can be given treatment if necessary.

You may notice blood in your urine; this is normal following surgery. If the bleeding continues, becomes very severe or forms clots, you must contact the ward or Urology on call at the Royal Liverpool Hospital.

**If your urine is not flowing freely into the drainage bag or stops flowing altogether you must contact ward 4B or Urology Doctor on call immediately.**

**Tel: 0151 706 2348**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2348**

Ask for Urology on call and explain you have recently had a radical prostatectomy.

**Do not let anyone change the catheter other than Urology staff**

### **Scrotal swelling**

If your scrotum is swollen, wear supportive briefs or an athletic support. When resting, raise your scrotum on a rolled towel. Scrotal swelling is common for up to a week but is harmless and painless.

### **Bowel function**

It is common for your appetite and bowel movements to recover gradually in the first week after surgery.

Usually bowel movements may not resume until three to five days after surgery. Avoid straining to have a bowel movement. It is recommended that you keep well hydrated by drinking four to eight glasses of water a day.

## **Other problems**

Always ensure the catheter tubing is not kinked, as this will prevent the urine from draining. This may cause urine to leak around the catheter. Leaking (bypassing) usually occurs when you have your bowels opened and is nothing to be alarmed about, it can also happen when your catheter is irritating your bladder.

You may also experience some cramping feelings, called bladder spasms, for several days to a week. Bladder spasms are a natural response of the healing bladder. These can be felt as urgency to urinate. Should bladder spasms become a problem, call your doctor

You may also experience a small amount of blood oozing from around your catheter. This is also normal and is nothing to be alarmed about.

If your leg bag becomes disconnected, it is best to apply a new one.

**Do not put your catheter in your pocket or allow it to trail on the floor.**

If your catheter falls out or you have any other problems not covered in this leaflet please contact the ward.

## **Securing your catheter**

It is important that your catheter bag is secured to your leg firmly. This will keep the catheter in the correct position and prevent any pulling. There should be a nice straight line from your catheter onto the tubing and into the drainage bag.

There should be no kinks in the tubing as this can cause your catheter to drain incorrectly and therefore cause leakage. Avoid any strain being put onto your catheter.

**Keep the leg bag below the level of your bladder to promote drainage.**

## **Feedback**

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

## **Further information**

**If you have any questions or worries, please speak to the ward nurses before you go home or once at home, contact the Urology ward 4B.**

**Tel: 0151 706 2348**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2348**

**Author: Urology Department**

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