

Please ask your physician or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.

Your Indwelling Urinary Catheter: Preventing Urinary Tract Infections

While you are in the hospital, you may need to have a tube in place to drain your urine. The tube, inserted into the bladder, is called an indwelling urinary catheter.

If you have a urinary catheter, germs can travel along the catheter. This may cause a urinary tract infection (UTI) in your bladder or kidneys. A UTI is not only painful, but it may:

- Lead to a more serious infection
- Extend your hospital stay

To prevent a UTI, it is important for your caregiver to remove the catheter when it is no longer needed. There are also steps you can take to help prevent a UTI while the catheter is in place.

Preventing a UTI

- Ask your physician or nurse when the catheter may be removed.
- Your physician may want you to increase your fluid intake. Drink extra liquids as instructed.
- Do not tug or pull on the catheter.
- Allow the urine to flow freely down and away from your body.
 - Make sure the drainage bag is below the level of your bladder and is kept off the floor.
 - Do not lie on the tubing and make sure it is not kinked.
 - If the drainage bag is three-quarters full, ask a nurse to empty the bag.
- Each day, follow these cleaning guidelines:
 1. Wash your hands well with soap and water.
 2. Clean the area where the catheter enters your body with a washcloth and mild soap and water. Rinse the soap off with water.
 3. Clean the catheter. Use a washcloth and the soap and water. Start where the catheter leaves your body and wash along the outside of the catheter (moving away from your body) for 3 to 4 inches.
- After each bowel movement, wipe the anal area from front to back, away from the catheter. Women should also clean the catheter with mild soap and water after each bowel movement.
- If you need help in keeping the area clean or bathing, your caregiver can assist you.

Symptoms to report

Talk with your physician or nurse if you notice any of these symptoms:

- Burning, itching or leaking of urine around the catheter
- Change in odor or color of your urine (cloudy, blood-tinged, mucous)
- Temperature more than 101 degrees F
- Chills
- Pain spreading from your back to your side
- Nausea and vomiting