

The Urinary Catheter Conversation Starts with YOU!

You Have an Important Role in Preventing Infection

What is a URINARY CATHETER?

It is a tube that is placed into the bladder to drain urine. The urinary catheter (often called a Foley) is left in place, and is connected to a drainage bag.

Urinary catheters should be placed only when needed and should be **removed as soon as possible** because they can be harmful.

Urinary catheters:

- can cause urinary infections, which could lead to a longer stay in the hospital and serious illness
- can be uncomfortable or painful
- may limit your movement in bed and in your room. Limited activity could make you weak
- may lead to falls because of tripping over the tubing

The risk of infection increases with each day the catheter is in place.

What are some of the RISKS of a urinary catheter?

Why WOULD I NEED a urinary catheter?

Reasons a urinary catheter may be used include:

- if you cannot pass urine on your own either because something is blocking the urine flow or your bladder does not empty as it should
- if it is important to know exactly how much urine you are making
- during and shortly after some types of surgeries

Urinary catheters should **not** be placed just because you cannot get out of bed, you are worried about falling or because you leak urine (meaning you are “incontinent” of urine). Talk to your healthcare team about safer measures that may be used instead.

When should I NOT RECEIVE a urinary catheter?

If I already have a urinary catheter, what can I do to HELP PREVENT INFECTION?

You play an important part in preventing infection!

- Talk to your healthcare team everyday; ask for your urinary catheter to be removed as soon as possible.
- Make sure healthcare team members clean their hands before and after touching your urinary catheter. If you do not see them clean their hands, please ask them to do so.
- Always clean your hands before and after touching your urinary catheter.
- Be aware of the position of the drainage bag; it should stay lower than your bladder (your bladder is below your belly button).
- Do not tug, pull, twist or kink your urinary catheter tubing.
- Tell your healthcare team whenever your drainage bag is more than half full.

References:

- 1) Reproduced from Catheterout.org with permission http://catheterout.org/sites/webservices.itcs.umich.edu/drupal/Bladder%20Bundle/files/Patient%20and%20family%20script_Final.pdf
- 2) FAQs about Catheter Associated Urinary Tract Infections (CAUTI), Shea et al. http://www.cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/uti/ca-uti_tagged.pdf
- 3) CDC reference http://www.cdc.gov/HAI/ca_uti/cauti_faqs.html

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