

## Catheter care

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### What is a catheter?

A catheter is a tube that drains urine from your child's body. The catheter is connected to tubing and a bag to collect the urine. Catheters come in different sizes and are made from different materials.

There are two main types of catheters. A foley catheter drains urine from the bladder through the urethra. A supra-pubic catheter is inserted through the abdomen to drain urine directly from the bladder, bypassing the urethra. Sometimes a catheter is held in place with stitches.

### What do I need to learn about catheter care?

Before you go home, your child's nurse will show you how to take care of the catheters, urine bags and dressings. This information sheet can help you remember and practice these skills.

Catheter care includes learning how to:

- empty urine bags
- clean the catheter site
- flush the catheter
- change a urine bag

Catheter care keeps the catheter site, tubing and bag clean. This helps to prevent infection. Another very important way to prevent infection is to wash your hands well for two minutes with soap and water or use hand sanitizer before doing any catheter care.

The following antiseptic solutions are acceptable: Chlorhexidine 0.05% and a Proiodine Solution, such as Betadine.

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## How do I empty a urine bag?

Urine bags must be emptied regularly. Empty the urine bag every 4 hours during the day. At night, empty the bag around midnight and again about 6 a.m. A bag that gets too full may pull on the catheter. This may cause pain or pull out the catheter. To empty a urine bag you will need these supplies:

- a clean container
- a bottle of 70% isopropyl alcohol
- sterile gauze pads
- waterproof tape
- a safety pin

### Follow these steps to empty a urine collection bag:

1. Wash your hands well with soap and water.
2. Place a clean container under the bag.
3. Put a small amount of alcohol on a gauze pad. Use the gauze to remove the lower cap on the bag and place it on a clean surface.
4. Let the urine flow into the container until the bag is empty. Try not to let the spout touch clothing, bed linen or the sides of the container.
5. Wipe the spout with a small amount of alcohol on a gauze pad. Put the lower cap back on the bag
6. Note the amount of urine, its colour and odour and whether you see any blood or sediment.

### Each time you empty a bag, please make sure to:

- Check for any twists or kinks in the tubing that could stop the urine from flowing freely.
  - Ensure that the catheter is taped firmly to the skin, close to where the catheter comes out (about 1 to 2 inches from where the catheter comes out).
  - Pin the bags to the inside of your child's clothing, so that the bag hangs lower than your child's bladder. There should be enough room for the bag and tubing to move freely, close to your child's body. Make sure that you do not puncture the bag with the pin.
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## How do I clean the catheter site?

Clean the area where the catheter comes out of the body, called the catheter site, once a day and as needed.

**If your child has a foley catheter in the urethra, use mild, unscented, hypoallergenic soap and water to clean around the catheter site at least once a day. No dressing is needed.**

To clean the supra-pubic catheter site, you will need these supplies:

- a bottle of saline (0.9% Sodium Chloride)
- a bottle of betadine
- sterile gauze pads
- waterproof tape or ties

### Follow these steps to clean the catheter site:

1. Wash your hands well with soap and water before you start.
2. Remove all dressings from the catheter sites. If the gauze has dried to the skin, use a small amount of saline to dampen and loosen the gauze.
3. Check all catheter sites for bleeding, drainage, redness or swelling. **Wash your hands again.** You may use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if you are alone and cannot leave your child to wash your hands again.
4. Put some betadine on a sterile gauze pad.
5. Use the gauze to clean around the catheter site.
6. Put some saline on another sterile gauze pad and wipe the site again.
7. Clean the next catheter site with betadine following the same steps.
8. Continue until all the catheter sites are clean.
9. Put some betadine on a clean gauze and clean scissors well. Wipe them dry with clean gauze. Open new sterile gauze and cut the gauze half way up in the middle. Place the gauze around each of the catheter sites. Secure with tape. You may also use Elastoplast bandaids – cut them half way up in the middle and place them around each of the catheter sites.

## How do I flush a catheter?

Look for any twists or kinks in the tubing if:

- the catheter seems to be draining less than before, even though your child has been drinking,
- the catheter stops draining and your child feels the need to pass urine or his or her abdomen is distended.

If you find a problem, straighten out the tubing. If you do not find a twist or kink, you will have to flush the catheter to unblock it.

To flush a catheter, you will need these supplies:

- sterile gauze pads
- a bottle of saline (0.9% Sodium Chloride)
- a syringe
- a bottle of antiseptic
- waterproof tape

### **Follow these steps to flush a catheter:**

1. Wash your hands well with soap and water before you start.
  2. Open a package of gauze.
  3. Draw up 5 to 10 ml of sterile saline into a syringe.
  4. Put the syringe back into its package to keep it clean. Make sure that the tip of the syringe does not touch clothing or bed linen. If it does, start over with a new syringe.
  5. Wipe the connection of the catheter tubing and urine bag with antiseptic on a gauze pad.
  6. Carefully disconnect the urine bag from the catheter tubing. Set the urine bag aside. Make sure that the tip of the urine bag stays clean by placing it on the inside of the open gauze package.
  7. Insert the tip of the syringe firmly into the opening of the catheter tubing.
  8. Gently push the saline into the catheter tubing.
  9. Remove the syringe from the catheter tubing.
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10. Reconnect the urine bag to the catheter tubing and check to see if urine flows out.
11. If urine flows out, tape the connection and pin the bag in place.
12. If urine does not flow out, disconnect the urine bag from the catheter tubing. Repeat steps 3 to 8. Gently pull back on the syringe plunger to try and clear the blockage. If urine flows out, reconnect the urine bag to the catheter tubing, tape the connection and pin the bag in place.
13. If you have tried to flush the catheter twice and urine is still not flowing out, call Pediatric Urology for advice (phone number on page 7).

## **When do I change the urine bag?**

Urine bags are not routinely changed. You may need to change the bag if it has a leak, there is sediment in the bag or it becomes disconnected. Empty the bag before you change it.

To change a urine bag, you will need these supplies:

- urine bag(s)
- sterile gauze pads
- a bottle of isopropyl alcohol
- waterproof tape

### **Follow these steps to change a urine collection bag:**

1. Wash your hands well with soap and water before you start.
  2. Open the package that contains the new bag and place it within reach.
  3. Pinch the catheter tubing closed and disconnect the old bag from the catheter tubing, and set the urine bag aside.
  4. Clean the end of the catheter tubing with alcohol on a gauze pad. Connect the catheter tubing and the new urine bag.
  5. Tape the connection and pin the urine bag to the inside of your child's clothing, so that the bag hangs lower than your child's bladder. Make sure that you do not puncture the bag with the pin.
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### **What if the urine bag falls off the catheter tubing?**

Clean both ends - the catheter tubing and the urine bag with alcohol on a sterile gauze pad. Reconnect the urine bag with the catheter tubing. Tape the connection and pin the bag in place.

### **What if the cap falls off the urine bag?**

Clean both ends - the cap and the urine bag with alcohol on a sterile gauze pad. Then put the cap firmly back on the urine bag.

### **What can my child eat and drink?**

Your child may eat a regular diet. Unless your doctor advised you not to, encourage your child to drink. Drinking lots of fluids helps to keep the urine flowing well.

### **What activities can my child do?**

Your child may do most of his or her regular daily activities, except swimming. Your child should take care and avoid any rough activities that could dislodge the catheter.

Always make sure that the urine bags do not pull on the catheter and the urine bag stays lower than your child's bladder.

Your child should have a sponge bath until he or she is seen by the surgeon at a follow-up visit.

### **When will the catheters come out?**

The surgeon will tell you when the catheters will be taken out. They usually remain in place for 7 to 14 days after surgery. Your child's catheters will be taken out in 2G Clinic.

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## When should I call Pediatric Urology?

- the urine colour is constantly pink or red
- urine smells bad
- a catheter becomes partially or fully removed, or dislodged
- you have tried to flush the catheter twice and still no urine is flowing out
- your child has a fever – a temperature higher than 38.5°C or 101.3°F
- increasing or significant redness, swelling, bleeding or drainage (discharge) from a catheter site
- pain that does not go away with pain medication or seems to be getting worse
- bladder spasms that are not relieved with medication
- unable to eat or drink as usual, nausea or vomiting

## How do I contact Pediatric Urology?

**During business hours (Monday to Friday), call McMaster Children's Hospital at 905-521-2100:**

- 2G Pediatric Urology Clinic – ext 78517 (for appointment information only)
- Natasha Brownrigg, Pediatric Urology Nurse Practitioner – ext. 73070
- Pediatric Urology Office – ext. 73777

**For urgent issues after hours and on weekends, call Paging at 905-521-5030:**

- Ask them to page the Pediatric Urologist on call.

**If your child is unwell and needs immediate attention:**

- Bring your child to the Emergency Department at McMaster Children's Hospital.
- If you live outside Hamilton, take your child to the nearest hospital emergency department.

**Other instructions for your child:**

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**Notes**

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