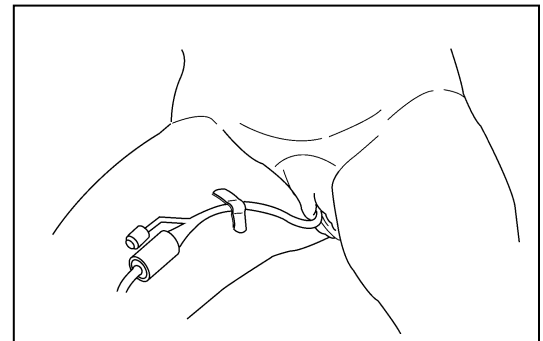
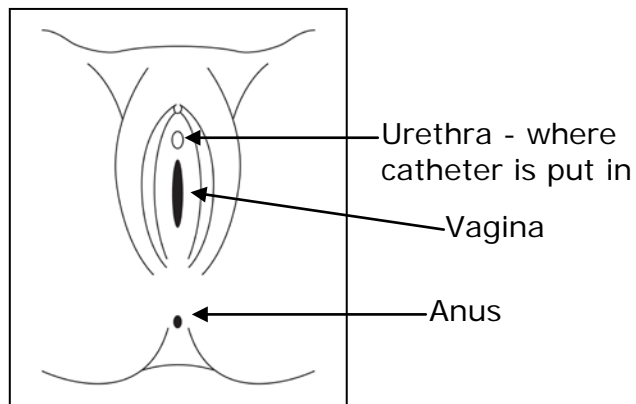
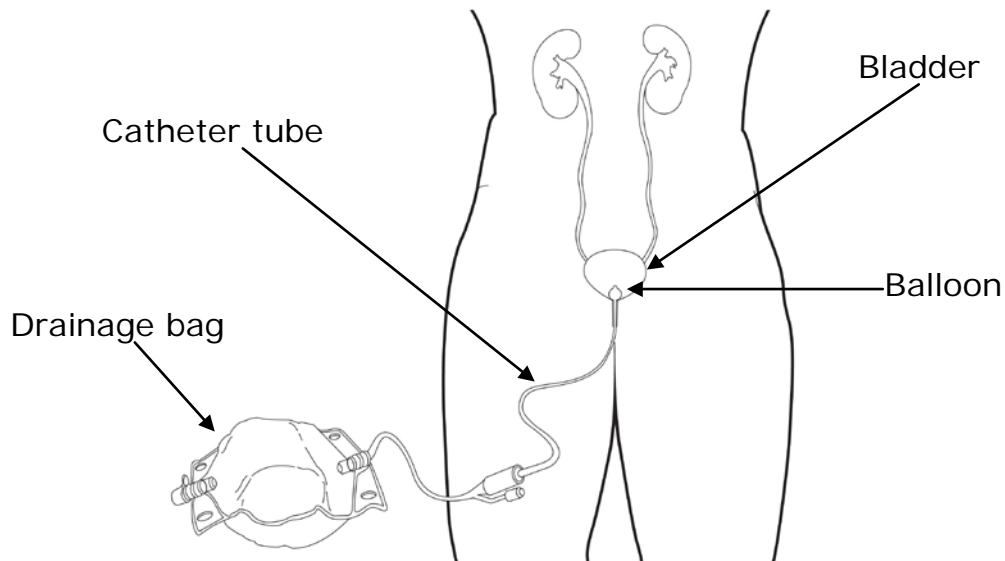


## Going home with a urinary catheter – for women

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A urinary catheter is a thin rubber tube that is put through your urethra into your bladder. This catheter drains urine. At the tip of the catheter there is a small balloon. This balloon sits in your bladder and holds the catheter in place.

You will be connected by CCAC (Community Care Access Centre) and a nurse will show you how to look after your catheter.



Taping the catheter helps keep the catheter in place.

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## **What does a catheter feel like?**

At first, you may feel like you have to urinate. You may have a burning feeling around your urethra.

Sometimes you may feel a sudden pain and have the need to urinate. You may also see urine come out around the catheter. This is caused by bladder spasms and you cannot control these. You do not want any tension on the catheter. Make sure the catheter is not blocked and is taped properly. If the spasms continue, contact your surgeon.

When your catheter is in, you may notice:

- grey or white tissue in your drainage bag
- your urine has a pink colour from a little blood

These are all normal.

## **When does the catheter come out?**

Your doctor decides when the catheter comes out. This depends on the reason for your catheter.

After the catheter is taken out, you may notice:

- a burning feeling when you urinate
- you feel an urgent need to urinate
- some urine dribbling
- small bloody specks in your urine

These should improve as you recover.

Call your doctor or home care nurse if you have any questions or concerns.

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## Shower and bath

You cannot have a bath until the catheter is out.

You can take a shower or a bath at the sink. Do not shower wearing the leg straps as they take too long to dry. Wet straps can cause skin problems.

When menstruating, you can use pads or tampons if they feel comfortable. Change the pad or tampon often and clean your perineal area after each pad or tampon change.

## Activity

You can do any activity that keeps the drainage bag below your bladder. You cannot swim or use a hot tub. Make sure that the catheter is secured so it does not pull when you walk.

## Cleaning around the catheter

Your nurse will show you how to clean around the catheter. Cleaning needs to be done 2 to 4 times a day.

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Using a clean washcloth, wash your perineum with soap and water.
- Gently wash any dry drainage or blood from around the catheter.
- Wash from front to back only.
- Rinse and dry gently.
- Do this every morning, at bedtime and when needed.
- Retape the catheter if it comes loose.

## Wearing a drainage bag

You may have 2 bags:

- **A small bag** that you can strap around your leg so you can walk around. This bag can be hidden under pants. Your nurse will show you how to put it on and empty it. You need to have it firm enough to stay on, but not too tight that it stops the flow of blood. **Never sleep wearing a leg bag.**
- **A larger or night bag** that you can attach to the side of your bed while sleeping. You will be shown how to attach and empty the bag.

**It is very important that the bag is lower than your bladder. The bag should not touch the floor.**

## To attach the bag to the catheter

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Wipe the tips of the bag and catheter with an alcohol wipe.
3. Connect the tip of the catheter to the bag.

## Washing the drainage bag

Wash and rinse the drainage bag once a day:

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Wash the bag in the sink or tub using warm water and dish detergent.
3. Rinse the bag well, using warm running water.
4. For control of odour, rinse the bag with a solution of ½ water and ½ vinegar.
5. Air dry the bag on a clean towel. Do not dry the inside of the bag.