What You Need to Know About Your Nephrostomy Tube

Information for patients and families

Let's work together to keep your nephrostomy tube working well and free from infection.

What is a nephrostomy tube?
A nephrostomy tube is a catheter (a thin tube). It is put in through your skin and into your kidney to drain your urine (pee).

Why would I need a nephrostomy tube?
You may need a nephrostomy tube when something is blocking your normal flow of urine. Urine from your kidney passes through tubes called ureters. Your ureters are connected to your bladder. If they get blocked, the urine will stay in your kidney and cause damage to it. A nephrostomy tube is put in to drain the urine directly from your kidney. You may need this tube if you have kidney stones, pelvic tumours, damage to your urinary system or prostate cancer.
How do I prepare to have a nephrostomy tube put in?

Before the procedure:

☑️ Get your blood tests done 7 days before your procedure date. The doctor who scheduled you for the procedure will give you a requisition (an order form) for these blood tests.

If you don’t get these blood tests done, the hospital may have to cancel your procedure.

☑️ Some medicines may increase your risk of bleeding during or after your procedure. Tell your doctor or health care provider if you are taking:

- medicines such as acetylsalicylic acid (Aspirin), clopidogrel (Plavix), prasugrel (Effient), ticagrelor (Brilinta), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, Nuprin), naproxen (Naprosyn) or indomethacin
- medicines such as warfarin (Coumadin), dalteparin (Fragmin), enoxaparin (Lovenox), tinzaparin (Innohep), fondaparinux (Arixtra), dabigatran (Pradaxa), rivaroxaban (Xarelto) or apixaban (Eliquis)

Your doctor or health care provider may tell you to stop taking these medicines for a certain number of days before your procedure.

☑️ Plan for someone to take you home after your procedure and stay with you overnight. You can’t go home by yourself.
The day of your procedure:

⚠️ Don’t eat or drink anything after midnight (12:00 am) before your procedure. If you need to take medicine, take it with only a sip of water.

☑️ Bring your Ontario health card (OHIP).

☑️ Check in at the Medical Imaging Reception Desk 1 hour before your appointment. We use this time to get you ready for your procedure.

After you check in, we:

• bring you to the Medical Imaging Day Unit
• help you change into a hospital gown
• ask you questions about your health and medicine history
• give you an intravenous (IV) so that you can have pain medicine and sedatives (medicine to relax you) during your procedure
• answer any questions you have
• ask you to sign a consent form. Signing this form means you agree to have the procedure.

What can I expect?

1. We bring you into the procedure room and place you on your stomach or side. We connect you to a monitor that shows your blood pressure, heart rate and oxygen level.

2. The nurses give you oxygen and medicine to help you relax.

3. We clean the area of your body where we place the tube.

4. The doctor uses a needle to give you a local anesthetic (numbing medicine) in the area of your body the tube goes in.

5. Once your skin is numb, your doctor uses a needle and wires, an ultrasound and an x-ray machine to guide the tube into the right place in your kidney.
6. We connect the tube to a bag to collect the urine and keep the tube in place with dressing. We also secure the bag to your leg to make sure the tube stays in place.

7. We then move you onto a stretcher and take you to the Medical Imaging Day Unit for about 4 hours.

8. After about 4 hours, you can go home. You must have someone take you home from the hospital and stay with you overnight.

Some patients stay in the hospital overnight. Your doctor would let you know and arrange this during an appointment before your procedure. Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) will contact you to plan for a nurse to help care for your tube.

It’s normal to feel sore for about 1 week after this procedure. You can take Tylenol for any pain.

What can I do when I get home?

For 24 hours after you get home:

- Don’t drive a car or use heavy machines.
- Don’t drink alcohol.
- Don’t make any financial or legal decisions.

Relax for the rest of the day.
How do I care for my nephrostomy tube?

Your nephrostomy tube is in a place that makes it hard for you to take care of it by yourself. You will need help. We can train a family member to help you or work with your local CCAC to have a community nurse help you.

- Your nephrostomy tube is not stitched in place. It is attached to your skin with 2 pieces of clear dressing.
- We give you a brochure called *How to Change Your Drainage Tube Dressing* to show you how to change your nephrostomy tube dressing.
- If the clear dressing comes loose, tape it down until a nurse can change the whole dressing. **Don’t remove this clear dressing. Your tube could fall out.**

**Other important points to remember:**

- Keep the bag that is connected to your tube securely in place. To protect your tube, pin the bag to your clothes using safety pins. Or, use the leg straps to keep it in place.
- There should be no pulling or stretching on the tube connected to the bag.
- Check the tube to make sure it is in place after you shower, change your clothes or do other activities.
- Make sure you empty the bag often. This will prevent pulling on the tube and help keep it in place.
- Keep the skin around your tube dry. When you shower, if your tube area gets wet, dry the skin completely.
- Clean the skin around the tube every day using soap and water. You can cover the tube with sterile (clean) gauze if you like.
- **Make an appointment to have your tube changed every 3 or 4 months or when problems happen.**
**What problems should I look out for?**

This chart lists problems you may have, how to prevent them and what to do if they happen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>How to prevent it</th>
<th>What to do if it happens</th>
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</table>
| **The skin around your nephrostomy tube is infected.**                  | Clean your tube and the skin around your entry site (where the tube goes in) once or twice a day. | • Change your dressing 2 times every day.  
• Clean your tube and skin with normal saline (you can buy it at your pharmacy).  
• Put antibiotic ointment (like Polysporin) around the entry site every time you change your dressing.  
• Then, put dry, sterile gauze over the tube.  
**Do this for 1 week. If your skin doesn't get better after 5 days, talk to the doctor who ordered this tube for you.** |
| **You have a kidney infection.**                                        | • Rinse your drainage bag with clean water every day.  
• Change your nephrostomy tube every 3 months.  
• Keep the tube taped to your skin and keep the drainage bag below the level of your kidneys.  
• Drink lots of fluids each day unless your doctor gave you different instructions. | • If your tube is capped, uncap it and connect your tube to a drainage bag. Call your doctor right away.  
Your tube will probably be changed within 48 hours.  
• You may need to start taking antibiotics. |
<p>| <strong>Your nephrostomy tube may not be draining urine.</strong>                    |                                                                                   |                                                                                         |</p>
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<tr>
<td>Your tube has partly or completely fallen out.</td>
<td>• Make sure your bag is firmly in place. Use safety pins or leg straps.</td>
<td>• Call your doctor or the Clinical Nurse Coordinator to make an appointment <strong>that same day</strong>.</td>
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<td>Signs:</td>
<td>• <strong>Don't</strong> pull off the clear dressing without help.</td>
<td>• After regular hours or on weekends, go to the nearest emergency room.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Your tube looks like it has moved or is completely out.</td>
<td>• Check your dressing every day to make sure it is securely in place.</td>
<td>• If your tube is partly out, tape it in place. It's important to keep it in as much as possible because your new tube can go in through the same opening and tract (or path).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No urine is draining into the bag.</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>If your tube falls out, call us right away.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There is leaking at the entry site of your tube.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Call the Medical Imaging Central Booking Office at: <strong>416 340 4800, extension 3384 Monday to Friday 8 am to 4 pm.</strong></td>
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<td>After hours or on weekends, go to the emergency department at Toronto General Hospital (TGH) or Toronto Western Hospital (TWH).</td>
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<td>The tract closes quickly, which makes it harder to replace if you wait too long.</td>
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### Problem

**Your tube is blocked.**

**Signs:**
- There is no drainage in the tube.
- The bag and urine are leaking around the tube site.
- You have pain in your kidney area.

**How to prevent it**
- Check for any kinks (bends or twists) in the tubing. If you have any, straighten them out.
  - It's hard to prevent your tube from blocking on the inside.
- Change your nephrostomy tube every 3 months.

**What to do if it happens**
- Call your doctor or the Clinical Nurse Coordinator for the Interventional Radiology Department:
  - **TGH:** 416 340 4800, extension 5403
  - **TWH:** 416 603 5800, extension 6301

  - You will probably need to have your tube changed. This takes about 20 to 30 minutes.
  - On weekends and holidays, please go to the emergency department at TGH or TWH.

### Who should I call if I have any questions?

If you have any problems with your nephrostomy tube, call the Medical Imaging department and ask to speak with a Clinical Nurse Coordinator:

**TGH:** 416 340 4800, extension 5403

**TWH:** 416 603 5800, extension 6301

Hours: Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

You can also call the doctor that scheduled you to get a nephrostomy tube.

For your regular tube changes, call the Medical Imaging Central Booking office to make an appointment. When you call, tell the clerk that you need an outpatient appointment in the Interventional Radiology department.

Phone: 416 340 4800, extension 3384

Hours: Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm