

How to Care for a Foley Catheter After Surgery

**For patients going home from the Day Surgery Unit
at Toronto Western Hospital**

Read this brochure to learn about:

- How to take care of the Foley catheter tube
- How to empty and change the drainage bag
- Problems to watch for
- Making a follow-up appointment



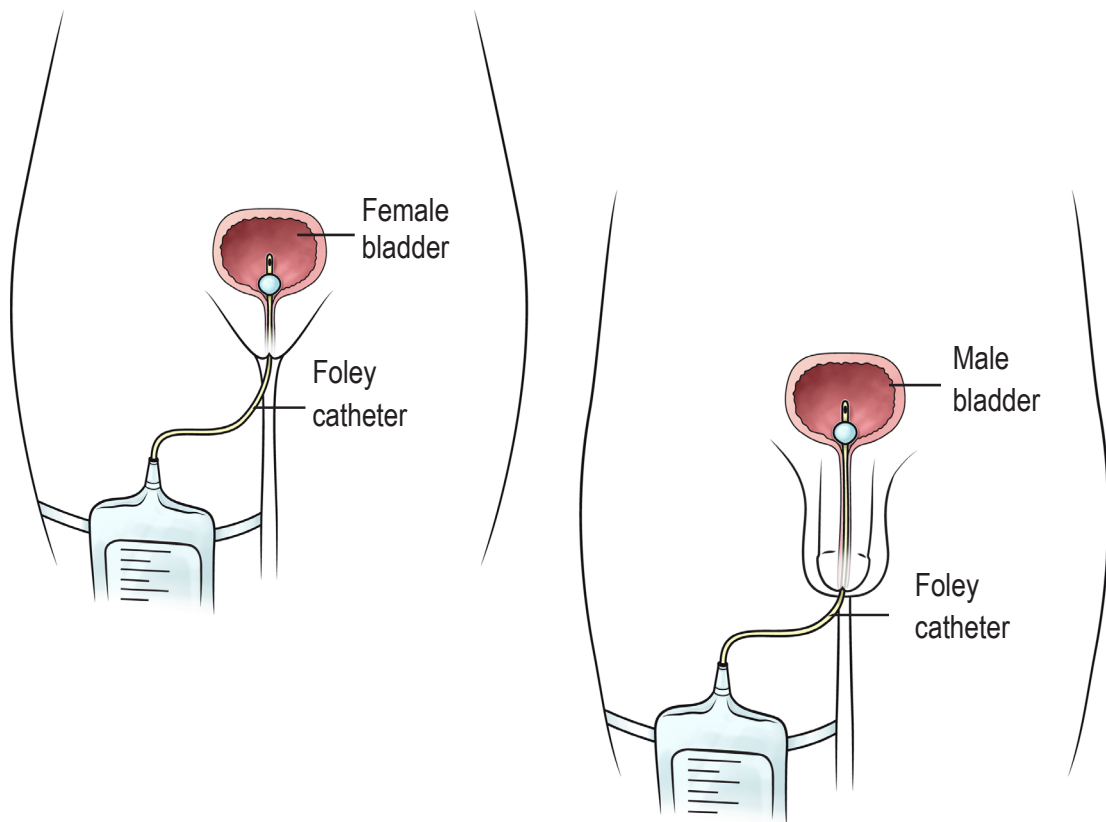
What is a Foley catheter?

The Foley catheter acts as a drain to empty your bladder.

It is a thin tube that drains urine from the bladder. The catheter is held in place by a small water-filled balloon inside your bladder.

You may have the catheter in for 1 day or longer. Your surgeon will decide after the surgery.

Before you leave the hospital, the nurses in the day surgery unit will show you how to take care of the catheter and give you the supplies you need to take home.



How to care for my Foley catheter

Wearing it properly

- Tape the Foley catheter comfortably to your upper thigh. The tube should not be pulled tight.
- Always keep the drainage bag below your bladder (when you are lying, sitting or standing).
- Keep the catheter tube free of kinks and loops so the urine can flow easily.

When to change or empty it

- You should **only** disconnect the tube when you are changing the drainage bags. Disconnecting the tube when you don't need to can cause harmful infections.
- Empty the drainage bags (both the leg and larger night bag) when they are half full.

How to stay healthy

- Drink extra glasses of fluids (such as water) if you have no limits on how much fluid you can drink.
- Check that your urine is healthy. It should be clear and yellow.
- We may give you a prescription for a medicine that helps with **bladder spasms** (when you suddenly feel the bladder muscle squeeze and without warning you have an urge to urinate). Fill the prescription at your pharmacy and follow the instructions on the bottle.

How do I wash my catheter tube?

Wash the areas around the catheter in the morning and in the evening. Each time you wash the catheter tube look carefully at the area where the catheter leaves your body to make sure there are no signs of infection such as swelling, redness and blood or pus.

Follow these steps to wash the catheter tube:

1. Before handling the catheter or bag always wash your hands well with soap and water.
2. Use hand soap and water to gently wash the area around the catheter tube and the tube.
3. Rinse the tube and the area around the tube with water. Then pat it dry with a clean towel.
4. Use a mirror to check for any signs of infection, such as swelling, redness and blood or pus.

For men:

- Gently pull the foreskin back to wash around the catheter. (Make sure the foreskin is put back into place).
- Wash the penis and scrotum too.

For women:

Wash the area around the catheter and the whole pubic area from front to back.

Your drainage bags

Before you leave the hospital we will give you 2 drainage bags to take home.

1. **Leg bag:** wear the leg bag during the day
2. **Large drainage bag:** wear the large drainage bag at night when you go to sleep

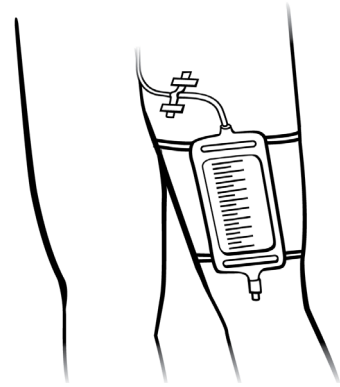
Important: Wear the drainage bags below the level of your bladder so the urine doesn't collect into your bladder.

1. Leg bag (day bag)

The leg bag lets you move freely during the day. Wear it under your clothes and strapped around your thigh.

Empty the leg bag when it is half full or every 2 to 3 hours.

Make sure the blue drainage valve is closed.



Follow these steps to strap on the leg bag

1. Put the white straps through the two holes, one at the top and one at the bottom of the bag.
2. Place the bag above your knee with the marking 'top' facing up and the drainage valve at the bottom.

Follow these steps to empty the leg bag:

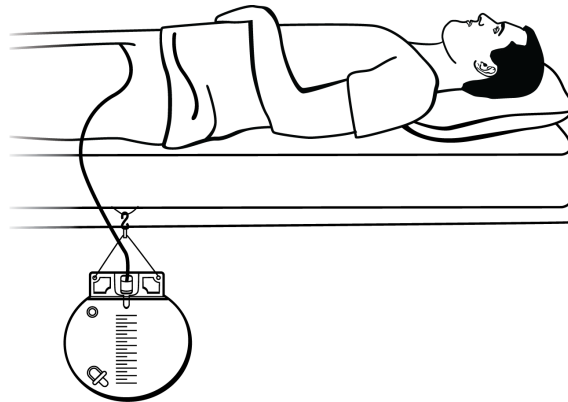
1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Place the blue drainage valve over the toilet and turn the blue valve to the left (counter-clockwise) to drain the urine out into the toilet. **DO NOT touch the drain opening with your fingers.**



3. After the bag is completely empty, turn the blue valve to the right (clockwise) to close the valve.
4. Wash your hands again.

2. Large drainage bag (night bag)

Wear the large drainage bag at night when you go to sleep because it holds more urine and does not need to be emptied as often. You can empty it every 8 hours, or sooner if you need to.



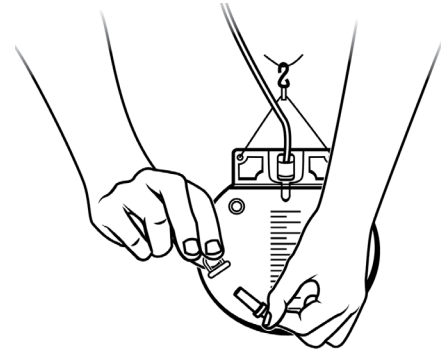
Follow these steps to change the drainage bag:

Remember the leg bag is worn during the day and the large night bag is worn only when sleeping at night. Your nurse in the Day Surgery Unit will teach you how to disconnect the catheter from the drainage bags.

To change the drainage bag:

1. Get these items before you start:
 - the urine bag (leg or large bag)
 - cotton swab
 - alcohol
 - clean towel
2. Wash your hands with soap and water before changing the bags.
3. Empty the bag before disconnecting it.

4. Now wash your catheter and areas around the tube (see page 3).
5. Place the clean towel under the connections to catch any urine that may drip out when changing the bags.
6. Soak a cotton ball with alcohol and clean the connections between the catheter tubing and the drainage bag.
7. Use two fingers to fold and pinch close the catheter tubing so that urine will not leak out.
8. Gently disconnect the catheter tube from the drainage bag. Be careful not to pull on your catheter.
9. Once you remove the bag, place the cap on the end of it and connect the other bag.
10. Tape the catheter tube to the top, inner part of your thigh.
11. Wash any urine drainage if there was leaking.
12. Wash the drainage bag you removed and hang it to dry in the shower or tub.
13. Wash your hands.
14. Hang the bag off the side of the bed you normally get up from.
15. Leave some slack in the line so that you will not pull on the catheter when you move your leg.
16. Check that there are no kinks or loops in the tubing.
17. Use the hook or string on the back of the bag to hook the bag to the bed.



Follow these steps to empty the large drainage bag:

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Place the drainage valve over the toilet and push the white handle to the 'open' position to drain the urine into the toilet.
3. Do not touch the opening with your fingers and do not let the drain touch the toilet.
4. After the bag is empty, push the white handle back to the 'closed' position.
5. Make sure the drainage valve is fully closed.
6. Wash your hands again.



Problems to watch for

Call your surgeon or your family doctor or go to the Toronto Western Hospital emergency department if you have any of these problems below. If you are from out of town, go to the nearest emergency department.

- You feel bloated, full or have pain in your lower belly area and there is no urine coming out
- You have a lot of bright red blood in your urine
- Urine draining from the bag is cloudy (there is pus or particles in your urine)
- Urine smells bad
- You have a fever (temperature higher than 38 °C or 101 °F)
- You have itching, a rash, burning or drainage near or where the Foley catheter leaves your body
- You checked the drainage tubing for kinks and loops and urine is still leaking near or where the Foley catheter leaves the body

Home Care — LHIN Local Health Integration Network

If your catheter is staying in for longer than a day, your surgeon may have a nurse from the home care, LHIN–Local Health Integration Network come to your house to help you care for the catheter.

The nurses in the hospital will let you know if your surgeon’s office has arranged your homecare. They will also give you the initial supplies you need for your catheter.

LHIN (LHIN-Local Health Integration Network)
Phone: 416 310 2222



My follow-up appointment

You will have a follow-up appointment with your surgeon to have your catheter removed.

- Dr. Elterman Phone: 416 603 5033
Main Pavilion 8th Floor (Room 317)
- Dr. Hassouna Phone: 416 603 5018
Main Pavilion 8th Floor (Room 306)
- Dr. Radomski Phone: 416 603 5713
Main Pavilion 8th Floor (Room 304)

Patients who were asked to return the next day to have their catheter removed by the surgeon, please go to:

- Cystoscopy Unit
Toronto Western Hospital, 399 Bathurst St.
East Wing – 4th floor
Phone: 416 603 5876



Special instructions for you

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