

# Home Care for Your Foley Catheter (Female)

A Foley catheter is a flexible tube that is put into your bladder to drain urine. It is put into the urinary opening called the urethra. The catheter is held in place inside your bladder by a small water-filled balloon.

Care is needed to keep the tube clean and to empty the urine bag.

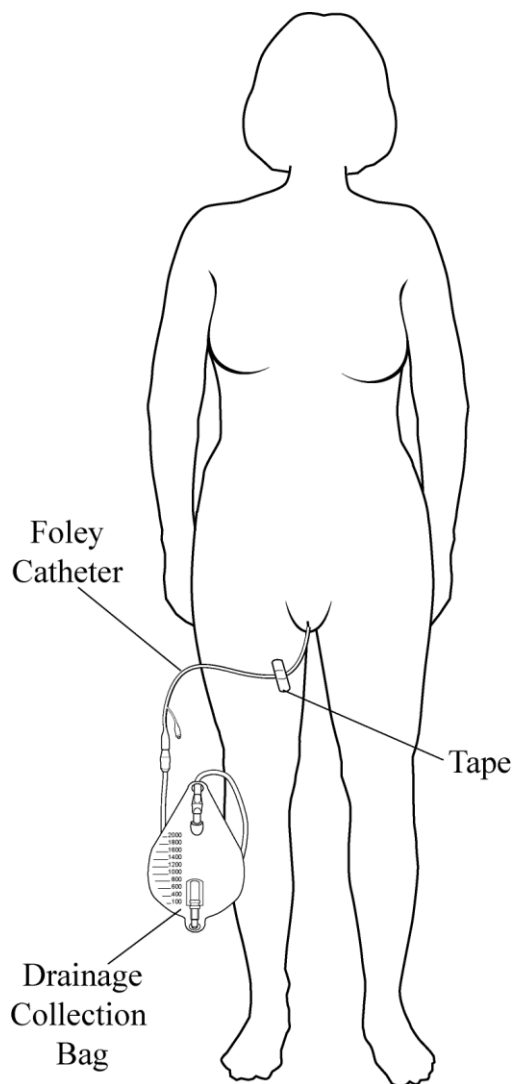
## Supplies Needed

- Soap and water
- Washcloth and towel
- Tape or leg strap

## Cleaning Around the Catheter

Wash around the catheter each day.

1. Gather supplies.
2. Wash your hands well with soap and water or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer.
3. Look carefully at the place where the catheter leaves your body. It may help to use a mirror. Check for any swelling, redness, or drainage, like blood or pus.



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4. Using a damp wash cloth, gently wash this area with soap and water. Be sure to wash the catheter as well as your entire pubic area. Rinse thoroughly and pat dry with the towel. Be careful not to pull on the tube.
5. Secure the catheter to your upper thigh with a leg strap or tape. If the leg strap becomes dirty, wash it with soap and water and let it air dry.

## Care of Drainage Bag

Your catheter needs to be connected to a drainage bag. You may use a larger drainage bag that attaches to your bed or wheelchair. Some people like to use a smaller leg bag when they are up walking or up in a chair. With either type of drainage bag, there are some things you will need to do:

- Be sure that the tubing to the drainage bag is below the level of your bladder. This prevents the urine from draining back into your bladder to reduce your risk of infection.
- Keep the tubing free of kinks so the urine can flow easily. This also keeps the urine from backing up into your bladder.

## Empty the bag and measure the urine

Empty your drainage bag when it is **just over half full**. Remember, the smaller leg bag will need to be emptied more often than your larger bag. You should also empty the drainage bag when you go from one type of drainage bag to another. Read the handout, [Leg Bag](#), for instructions on changing from the larger to the smaller drainage bag.

1. Use a container that has measure markings so you know how much urine you are passing.
2. Remove the drain tube from the holder on the bottom of the bag.
3. Hold the drain over the container and open the clamp so the urine drains into the container.
4. When the bag is empty, **close the clamp** on the drain. Use a clean paper towel or tissue to dry the end of the drain and place it back into the holder.
5. Note the amount of urine in the container as well as the color and smell of the urine.

6. Pour the urine into the toilet. Rinse the container with water and throw the water into the toilet. Set the container on a clean paper towel until it is needed again.
7. Wash your hands well with soap and water or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer.
8. Write down the amount of urine with the date and time. Mark the color and smell of the urine.

Here is an example of what to write down:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Amount drained (ounces or cc's)</b>	<b>Color, Smell</b>

Healthy urine should be clear and have a yellow color with a mild smell. Talk to your doctor or nurse about what you can expect if you have had bleeding or an infection in your urine.

### **Care of the Drainage Bag**

Clean your drainage bag every few days with a mixture of vinegar and water.

1. Mix 1½ cups of vinegar in 2 quarts of water.
2. Pour the vinegar water mix into the drainage bag through the drain and swish it around in the bag. Lay the bag in the bathtub or sink to soak for about 30 minutes. Be sure the tubing is full of the mixture too.
3. Drain the mixture back out and rinse with clean water. Dry the outside of the bag and tubing. Do not use a bleach solution on the bag or tubing because it can damage the bag and tubing.

Change to a new drainage bag every month, or if there is a leak in the tubing.

**When to call your doctor or nurse:**

- Urine is cloudy or has a foul odor
- Temperature of 100.4 degrees F or 38 degrees C or higher
- Unusual itching, rash or burning near or where the catheter leaves the body
- Feeling of bladder fullness or concern that the catheter is plugged
- Blood in your urine
- No drainage of urine
- Urine leaking around the tube
- Catheter falls out
- **If you had surgery** and you have **more** urine leaking or bloody drainage than you were told to expect

**If you need to call because of a problem:**

- Take your temperature and write it down.
- Carefully describe the problem as detailed as you can. For example if the problem is pain, state where the pain is, what it feels like (sharp, dull, burning) and when it occurs. Write the information down to help you remember.
- Gather all of this information and bring it and a paper and pencil with you to the phone.
- You are now ready to call your doctor or nurse.

❖ **Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: [health-info@osu.edu](mailto:health-info@osu.edu).**