Your Suprapubic Catheter

A suprapubic catheter was placed by your doctor to help you empty your bladder. This flexible tube is put into the bladder through an incision in your lower abdomen during surgery. You may be instructed to go home with your catheter connected to a drainage bag or capped off.

If your suprapubic catheter is connected to a drainage bag:

There are two types of drainage bags – large drainage bags and small drainage bags. The larger drainage bag is good to use at night. The smaller bag, called a leg bag, can be worn when you are up and walking or sitting in a chair. With both types of bags, there are some things you should know.

- Be sure the tubing to the drainage bag is below the level of your bladder. This is done so the urine does not drain back into your bladder putting you at risk for infection.
- Keep the tubing free of kinks so the urine can flow easily.
- 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.

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You should also empty the drainage bag when you go from one type of drainage bag to another.

- Use a container that has measure markings so you know how much urine you are passing. Keep track of how much urine you are passing so you can tell your doctor. Write down the date and time, and how much urine there was each time you empty the bag.

- Note the color and smell of your urine. Healthy urine should be clear and have a yellow color with a mild smell. A small amount of bloody urine is sometimes common right after surgery. Notify your doctor if the urine becomes cherry colored or has clots. If the urine appears pink or like “fruit punch”, rest and increase fluid intake.

- Be sure to close the clamp on the drainage bag after you drain the urine.

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

- You can clean your drainage bags as needed with some vinegar and water. Mix about 1 part of vinegar with 12 parts of water. Pour the vinegar water mix in through the drain and swish it around in the bag. Drain the mixture back out and then rinse the bag 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.

**If your suprapubic catheter is capped off and you have a Foley catheter:**

If the Foley (urethral) catheter is to straight drain and the suprapubic catheter is capped off, you can just leave the suprapubic catheter capped as long as the Foley continues to drain. If your Foley catheter stops draining and your abdomen feels full, then uncap the suprapubic catheter so it can drain and contact your doctor’s office.

**If your suprapubic catheter is capped off and you do not have a Foley catheter:**

Your doctor may have instructed you to check post void residuals. This means to check how much urine was left in your bladder after you tried to urinate normally.
How to check the post void residual:

1. Drink plenty of fluids to allow the bladder to fill. When you feel the urge to urinate, go to the bathroom and try to urinate as normally as possible. If you have trouble feeling when your bladder is full, urinate every 3 to 4 hours during the daytime. You may sleep through the night unless your full bladder wakes you.

2. Try to pass urine normally into a container.

3. Measure the amount of urine in the container.

4. Unclamp your catheter and drain it into the container.

5. Measure the amount of urine.

6. Clamp your catheter.

7. Write down the amounts of urine that you passed normally and the amount from your catheter on your record sheet.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Amount Urinated</th>
<th>Amount from Tube</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/24</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12:45 pm</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>80</td>
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Over time, one can expect that the amount of urine that you pass normally will increase and the amount from your catheter will decrease.

Care of Catheter

Change the dressing once a day. Change it again if the dressing falls off, becomes dirty or gets wet. Please follow these steps:

1. Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 15 seconds. Rinse with water and towel dry.
2. Gather your supplies:
   - Plastic trash bag
   - Cotton tipped applicator, like a q-tip, or cotton ball
   - Hydrogen peroxide
   - Split 4 x 4 gauze dressing or drain sponge

   All these supplies can be bought at your local pharmacy or grocery store.

3. Take off the old dressing being careful not to pull on the tube. Check the dressing for any unusual or foul drainage. Throw the old dressing away.

4. Wash your hands again.

5. Look carefully at where the tube leaves the skin (exit site). Check for any unusual or bad smelling drainage, swelling, bleeding, or skin irritation.

6. Wash around the site gently with soap and water. You may take a shower with the tube. It will not hurt it to get wet.

7. Use a Q-tip or cotton ball with hydrogen peroxide on it and clean any crustiness around the catheter that does not come off with the soap and water. Start at the place where the tube comes out of the skin and clean outward 3 to 4 inches in a circular motion. Never clean back towards the tube. Let the area dry.

8. Place a split 4 x 4 around the tube. Tape it in place.

9. Secure the catheter with adhesive tape to the skin so it cannot be pulled.
Call your health care team if you have:

- Urine that is cloudy and/or has a foul odor
- A temperature of 101 degrees or higher
- Redness, pain or pus-like drainage around tube
- Bladder pain
- An open sore by the tube
- Urine leaking around the tube
- No urine drainage
- A feeling of bladder fullness or a concern that the tube is clogged
- Cherry colored urine or clots
- A catheter that falls out

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.
# Care of Your Suprapubic Catheter

**Record Sheet**

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<tr>
<th>Date / Time</th>
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