

If you have any questions or concerns, please ask your physician or nurse.

Your Indwelling Urinary Catheter: Preventing Urinary Tract Infections

While you are in the hospital, you may need to have a tube put into your bladder to drain urine. The tube is known as an indwelling urinary catheter.

If you have a urinary catheter, germs can travel along the catheter into your body. This may cause a urinary tract infection (UTI) in your bladder or kidneys. A UTI is not only painful, but it may:

- Lead to a more serious infection
- Make your hospital stay longer

To prevent a UTI, it is important for your caregiver to take the catheter out when it is no longer needed. There are also steps you can take to help prevent a UTI while you have the catheter.

Preventing a UTI

- Ask your physician or nurse when they will take out the catheter.
- Your physician may want you to drink more fluids. Drink extra fluids as instructed.
- Do not tug or pull on the catheter.
- Allow the urine to flow freely down and away from your body.
 - Make sure the drainage bag is below the level of your bladder.
 - Keep it from touching the floor.
 - Do not lie on the tubing and make sure it is not kinked.
 - If the drainage bag is 3/4 full, ask a nurse to empty the bag.
- Follow these cleaning guidelines every day:
 1. Wash your hands well with soap and water.
 2. Clean the area where the catheter enters your body. Use a washcloth with mild soap and water. Rinse the soap off with water.
 3. Clean the catheter. Use a washcloth, soap and water. Start where the catheter leaves your body and wash along the outside of the catheter (moving away from your body) for 3 to 4 inches.
- After each bowel movement, wipe the anal area from front to back, away from the catheter. Women should also clean the catheter with mild soap and water after each bowel movement.
- If you need help bathing or keeping the area clean, ask your caregiver to help you.

Symptoms of a UTI

Tell your physician or nurse if you notice any of these symptoms:

- Burning, itching or leaking of urine around the catheter
- Change in odor or color of your urine (cloudy, blood-tinged, mucous)
- Temperature more than 101 degrees F
- Chills
- Pain spreading from your back to your side
- Nausea and vomiting