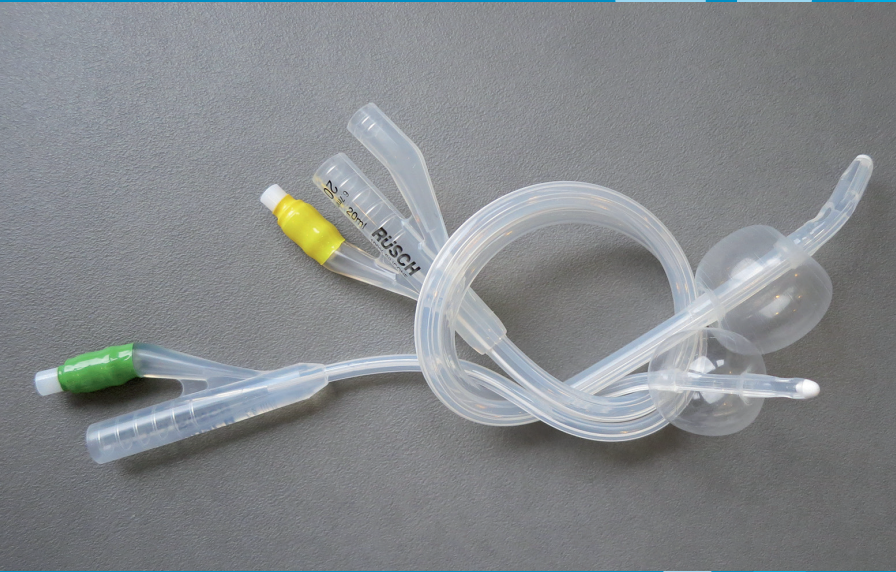




Going home with a catheter through the urethra

patient information

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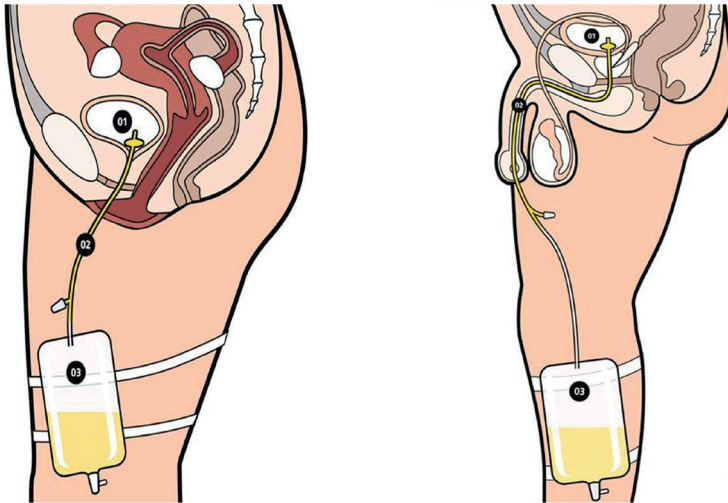
You are going home with a catheter inserted through the urethra, also known as an indwelling catheter or bladder catheter.

This brochure provides some advice on the use and care of the catheter at home. These are general guidelines and not all topics may apply to you.

This brochure does not replace the personal instructions given by your doctor or nurse, but serves as a reference guide for use at home. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to ask the hospital staff, your doctor or your home visit nurse.

CATHETER

An indwelling catheter is a tube that runs via the urethra into the bladder (fig. 1). A small balloon at the end keeps the catheter in place in the bladder. Urine goes via the catheter into a collection bag.



01 bladder

02 catheter

03 collection bag

Figure 1. Catheter via the urethra

USE OF A URINE COLLECTION BAG

When the catheter is connected to a collection bag, urine continuously drains through the catheter into the bag and your bladder is empty at all times.

There are day and night urine collection bags (fig. 2).



Figure 2. Day and night collection bags

GENERAL POINTS TO REMEMBER

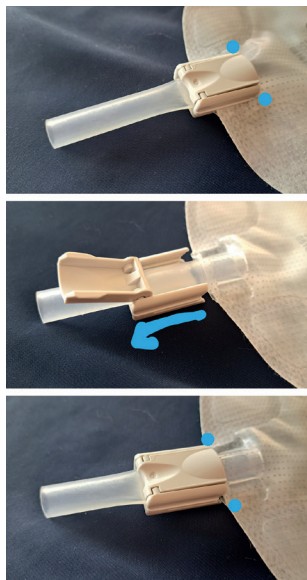
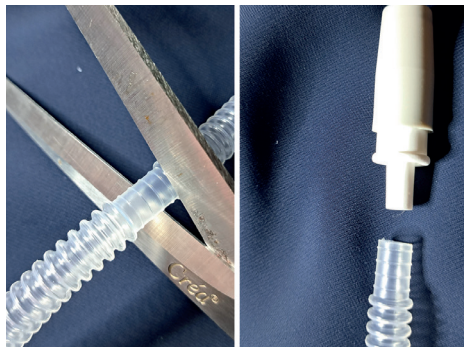
Always wash your hands:

- Before and after changing and emptying the night bag
- Before and after connecting or disconnecting the night collection bag to the leg collection bag

DAY BAG OR LEG BAG

You can shorten the tube of the urine collection bag by cutting a piece off (depending on whether it is worn on the upper or lower leg). Please note that the connector cannot be inserted into the ribbed section of the tube. This is why you should cut off the ribbed section (fig. 3) using clean scissors.

Figure 3. Cut off the ribbed section.



There is a drainage tap at the bottom of the leg bag (fig. 4) along which the bag can be emptied. Before first use, slide the grey tap of the collection bag downwards so that the top aligns with the bottom of the bag. This prevents leakage due to small tears at the bottom of the leg collection bag. Then close the tap.

Figure 4. Slide the drainage tap before first use.

The leg collection bag is secured to your leg using leg straps (fig. 5) and is worn under your clothing. The leg collection bag can be worn on either the lower or upper leg (for example, if you want to wear a skirt or shorts).

Each corner of the leg collection bag has an opening through which you thread the leg strap. Fasten the leg straps around your leg (fig. 6) and press the Velcro firmly together. If the leg straps are too long, you may cut off the excess, but leave a few extra centimetres as the leg straps may shrink when washed.

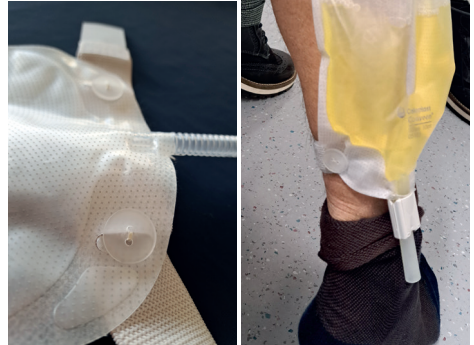


Figure 5 and 6. leg collection bag with leg straps



Figure 7. Leg holder or sleeve

If you suffer from swollen legs or oedema, the straps may become tight and irritate your skin. In that case, you can attach a leg collection bag holder or sleeve (fig. 7) around your leg. This is an elastic holder that can be worn on either the lower or upper leg.

The sleeve is double-layered, stretchable and available in different sizes. It has an opening for the drainage tap to make emptying the collection bag easier.

It is best to position the catheter and tube (fig. 8) towards your hip, preferably along the outside of the lower leg. Passing through the groin may cause a kink in the catheter. You can use a fixation strap to secure the tube.

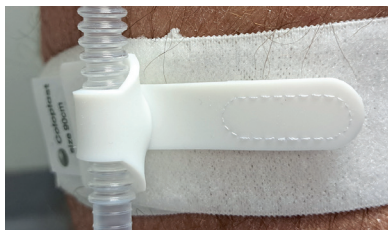


Figure 8. Catheter and tube secured with a fixation strap

You can empty the urine bag into the toilet (placing one foot on the rim of the toilet – see fig. 9), or first empty it into a measuring jug or bucket. To empty the urine collection bag, push down the tap of the collection bag. If necessary, you may loosen the lower leg strap to make emptying easier.



Once the collection bag is empty, close the drainage tap again by moving the tap upward. Empty the bag regularly (when it's about three-quarters full).

Figure 9. Emptying the urine collection bag

NIGHT COLLECTION BAG

The night collection bag has a larger capacity (2 litres).

Using a bed hook (fig. 10), you can attach the night collection bag to the side of your bed. Make sure the night collection bag is always positioned lower than the leg collection bag. If the bed hook does not fit your bed, place the night collection bag in a bucket next to the bed.

Connect the leg collection bag and night collection bag (fig. 11) by attaching the connection of the night collection bag to the drainage tap of the leg collection bag. Do not forget to open the tap afterwards.

The next morning, close the tap again and disconnect the night collection bag from the drainage tap of the leg collection bag.



Figure 10. Bed hook



Figure 11. Leg and night collection bag connection

After emptying the night collection bag, you can rinse it.

Let water run into the bag via the connector or using a funnel (fig. 12). You may add a small amount of vinegar to prevent odours. Shake well and empty via the drainage tap (fig. 13). Store the night collection bag in a dry place.



Figure 12. Let water run into the bag via the connector or using a funnel.

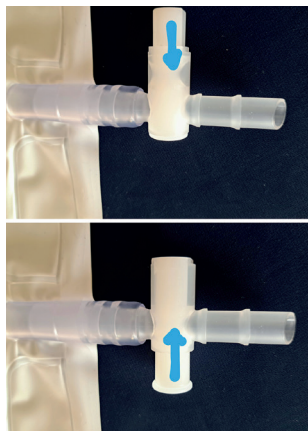


Figure 13. Empty the night collection bag via the drainage tap.

USE OF A CATHETER VALVE

In exceptional cases, your doctor may allow the use of a catheter valve.

- A catheter valve is connected directly to your catheter (fig. 14). No collection bag is needed for this and the bladder functions as a collection bag.

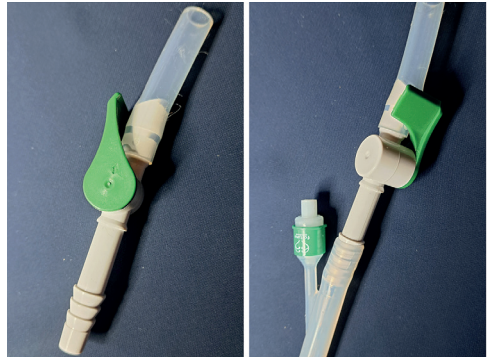


Figure 14. Catheter valve

- The catheter valve is attached to the end of the catheter.
- It's important to open the valve every three to four hours to empty the bladder, depending on your fluid intake.

DAILY CARE

HYGIENE

These actions can be carried out either by yourself or by a home visit nurse.

Wash your hands before and after disconnecting or changing the collection bag.



- ✓ Wash your genital area every day.
 - If you're a man, also wash under the foreskin.
 - If you're a woman, spread the labia well while washing.
 - Also clean the catheter and/or the catheter valve.

When showering, you can put the collection bag in a plastic bag (fig. 15).

Figure 15. Use a plastic bag while showering.

URINE DRAINAGE

- The collection bag must always be lower than the bladder, whether you're sitting or lying down.
- Make sure you drink enough (1.5 to 2 litres per day)
- Empty the bag regularly (when it's about three-quarters full).
- Avoid direct pulling on the catheter to prevent damage to the tissue in the urethra.

MOST COMMON COMPLAINTS

Below is a list of possible complaints that may occur but do not necessarily apply to you. If you experience any of these complaints, consult your doctor.

- ✓ **Irritation and pain in the urethra, caused by friction from the catheter.** Maintain good daily hygiene by cleaning the opening of the urethra and the catheter. You may shower and wash the genital area with soap and water. You can secure the catheter with a fixation strap or adhesive tape to prevent continuous friction.
- ✓ **Bladder cramps.** These are painful contractions of the bladder, often caused by the bladder attempting to expel the catheter because it is a foreign object. The urologist may prescribe medication to reduce these complaints.

Warning signs to start medication:

- Constant urge to urinate.
- Leakage alongside the catheter.
- Men may experience sharp pain in the penis or glands.

Do you have an appointment to have the catheter removed?

If so, you must stop taking the medication for bladder cramps the day before the catheter is removed. Otherwise, the bladder will have reduced contractile strength.

✓ **Urinary tract infection.** The risk of a urinary tract infection is more common with a catheter present. In this case it's important to flush the bladder through adequate fluid intake (1.5 - 2l per day, drinks during meals included). A urinary tract infection must first be ruled out on the basis of a urine culture.

- Contact a doctor urgently if you have a high fever (above 38.5°C), chills, confusion, low blood pressure or rapid pulse.
- A small amount of blood in the urine is NOT abnormal.

If you're using a catheter valve, connect a collection bag and leave the catheter valve open. A good fluid intake and a continuous outflow of urine will flush away the bacteria.

If the urine culture shows an infection but you feel well and have no fever, antibiotics are not necessary immediately. Talk to your doctor.

✓ **Blocked catheter.** Please note: these signs are often mistaken for bladder spasms. Request advice!

Possible signs of a blocked catheter:

- Urge to urinate
- Bloated abdomen
- Persistent lower abdominal pain
- No urine in the collection bag
- Leakage alongside the catheter

✓ **Catheter dislodgement.** If the catheter was inserted following a procedure to the bladder or urethra and is important for healing and the success of the procedure, the catheter must be reinserted in hospital as soon as possible. [Contact the hospital or the unit from which you received your information.](#)

If the catheter was inserted for another reason, you may be able to contact your doctor or home visit nurse.

COST

There is a reimbursement system through the health insurance provided you have a doctor's prescription.

Collection bags are available from pharmacies or home care shops. To receive reimbursement, the pharmacy needs a bandagist registration number. [Supplies can also be delivered to your home.](#) [Ask your nurse for advice if needed.](#)

The reimbursement covers 20 day bags and 20 night collection bags every three months. You're entitled to replace the collection bags every five days (RIZIV).

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

✓ daytime:

- consultation 10, tel. 016 34 66 85

✓ weekend:

- hospitalisation 15, tel. 016 34 66 10

✓ In urgent cases:

call the general number 016 33 22 11 and ask for the urologist on call.

NOTES

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Duplication of this text and these illustrations shall always be subject to prior approval of the UZ Leuven Communications Department.

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