

Care for a catheter inserted through the skin while at home

You have been fitted with a catheter through the skin on your abdomen. The purpose of the catheter is to ensure free flow of urine. The catheter has a balloon filled with liquid at one end to keep it in place.

Hygiene

To avoid infections, wash your hands before and after handling the catheter. The best way to ensure that the catheter stays clean is to shower daily. Dry the skin around the catheter after showering. You may rinse the area around the catheter more often under a shower if the skin looks red or if there is any exudate. Air baths are also recommended. No gauze is needed at the site where the catheter enters the skin if there is no exudate. If there is gauze dressing where the catheter enters the skin remove it before showering and replace with a new one afterwards. You may take sauna baths as normal unless you have had a procedure that prevents them. Swimming should be avoided.

Securing the catheter

The catheter should be secured with tape to the skin on the abdomen to avoid pulling. Every day, make sure the catheter is properly secured and check for presence of exudate where the catheter enters the skin and the condition of the skin. It is important to make sure that the catheter does not get twisted or kinked as it will prevent free flow of urine.

Collection bag

If the catheter is connected to a urine collection bag, the bag must be kept below bladder level. Make sure that urine is allowed to flow freely into the collection bag. Empty the bag every morning and every night, and whenever necessary. The collection bag is replaced once a week. When you replace the collection bag, remove the protective cap at the end of the collection bag tube and connect the end to the catheter. Avoid touching the tip of the collection bag or the end of the catheter to keep them clean. To avoid infections, avoid unnecessary touching of the connection between the catheter and the collection bag. Once emptied, the collection bag may be discarded as normal household waste.

Use of catheter valve

Unless otherwise prescribed, a catheter valve may be used instead of a collection bag. The catheter may be closed using the catheter valve. Remember to open the valve regularly to empty the bladder. Open the valve when you feel the urge to urinate, or regularly, every 3-4 hours, during the day. The amount of urine that collects in the bladder should not exceed 400 ml. The catheter valve must be replaced once a week. To avoid infections, avoid unnecessary

touching of the connection between the catheter and the valve. The used catheter valve may be discarded as household waste.

Sex life

The catheter does not prevent sexual intercourse unless you have other health issues that prevent it.

Physical activity

The catheter does not restrict physical activity unless you have undergone a procedure that limits physical activity. During physical activity, make sure that the catheter does not get twisted or kinked and that urine is allowed to flow freely into the catheter bag, if you are using one. There are no restrictions for driving a car.

Food and drink Drink

1.5-2 litres of fluids a day, unless you have been told to restrict your fluid intake because of some other illness. A large intake of fluids ensures sufficient flow of urine, which prevents urinary tract infections and ensures that the catheter remains open.

Change of catheter

The catheter is usually changed every 3 months at the health care centre.

Catheter supplies

Collection bags, catheter valves, gauze and tape are available from the supply dispensary at your health care centre.

Catheter after a prostate procedure

You may have been fitted with a catheter through the skin on your abdomen after a prostate procedure. In this case, the purpose of the catheter is to act as temporary "emergency exit" for urine. The catheter ensures that the bladder is emptied. The idea is that you urinate normally, after which you open the valve on the catheter to check that the bladder is empty. When the amount of urine coming from the catheter is 100-200 ml or less, the catheter may be removed by a nurse at your health care centre. Please make an appointment at your health care centre to have the catheter removed.

In the event of problems

Contact the nearest health care centre if

- the catheter gets blocked. Symptoms of catheter blockage include pain in the lower abdomen, swelling in the lower abdomen, a need to urinate or defecate. Signs of catheter blockage may include the following: there is no urine in the collection bag, or urine comes out next to the catheter. If no urine comes out through the catheter, first make sure that the catheter is not twisted, the collection bag is below bladder level and that you have been drinking fluids as instructed.

- you have constant pain in your lower abdomen or get a fever over 38°C
- your urine is bloody, either repeatedly or completely.
- there is increased skin redness or exudate at the site where the catheter enters the skin, or the skin becomes tender, or if the
- catheter is displaced from the bladder.

Contact information

Surgical ward 2
Tel 02 627 6450

Satasairaala Satakunta Hospital District,
Customer service
tel 02 627 71

For Satasairaala's website go for www.satasairaala.fi