

Cystostomy or urinary catheter through the abdominal wall

A catheter through the abdominal wall into the bladder is called a cystostomy or suprapubic catheter. The purpose of this catheter is to guarantee that the urine flows freely out from the urinary bladder. A cystostomy may be in place temporarily or permanently. It may be connected to a collection bag for the urine or the catheter may be capped with a stopper or valve (tap). The catheter needs to be changed every three months and this is usually done at your municipal health care center.

Observe this when you have a cystostomy

- Wash your hands thoroughly before and after handling the catheter. This is to avoid infections.
- Spray or shower the stoma (the base of the catheter) daily and dry the skin carefully afterwards.
- A gauze/bandage is not necessary at the stoma unless there is secretion from the stoma. If this is the case, use a gauze/bandage over the stoma site. Suitable gauzes/bandages are available at all pharmacies.
- Drink 1.5–2 liters of fluid daily, unless your daily liquid intake is restricted for some medical reason. You should drink enough to prevent urinary tract infections and to keep the catheter better in place.
- You may fasten the catheter to the skin of the abdominal wall with adhesive tape.
- The catheter does not prevent exercising, walking/running or normal sex life.

The catheter is connected to a collection bag

- Keep the bag below the level of the bladder. This will guarantee free flow of urine into the bag.
- If you have too tight clothes, this may obstruct the flow of urine into the bag.
- Replace the urine collection bag with a new one once weekly.

The catheter is capped with a stopper or valve (tap)

- Empty the collection bag regularly, about every 3–4 hours.
- Replace the stopper or valve with a new one once weekly.

In the event of a problem

- Get in touch with a doctor if you experience nausea, pain, fever or stomach problems. If the urine becomes smelly, this is often a sign that there is an infection.

- Bladder cramps may cause some urine to leak at the base of the stoma site or through the urethra (pee hole), even if the catheter is in place as it should. If there is leakage, check if the catheter is bent or blocked. Straighten the catheter, place the collection bag below the level of your bladder and empty the bladder by opening the valve (tap).
- Drink plenty of fluids before changing the catheter to secure a sufficient urine flow soon after the change.
- Your urine should not be blood-stained, but some blood may appear in the urine when you change the catheter.
- If the catheter comes off or breaks, contact immediately your doctor or the unit which attends to your cystostomy.