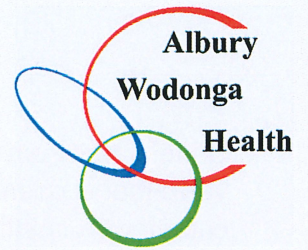


# CATHETER CARE IN THE HOME DISCHARGE INFORMATION

Hume Regional Clinical Continence Leadership Group



*This guide does not replace advice provided by your health care professional.*

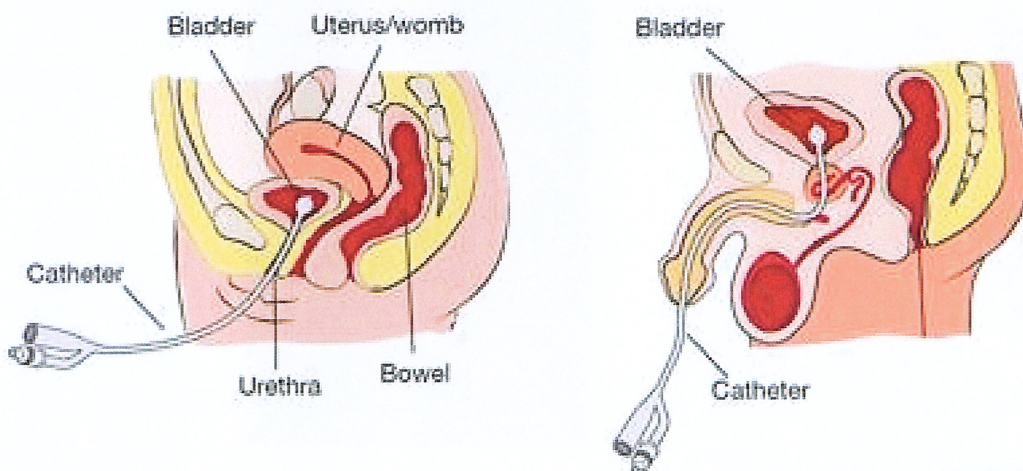
## Discharge Information

A catheter can make a difference to your health and quality of life. This may be a big adjustment for you. This information will help you manage some of the physical aspects of living with a catheter. Having a catheter may be necessary for a short time (days or weeks) or for a long time (months or permanently).

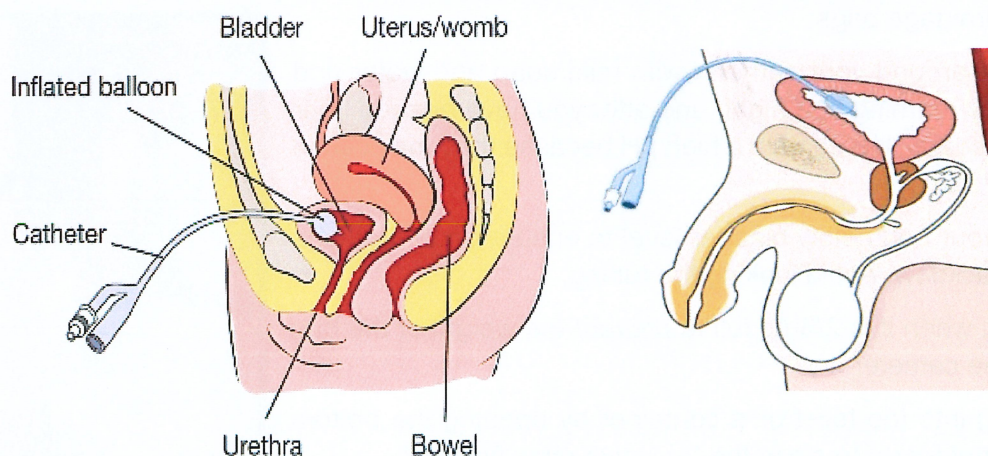
## What is a Catheter?

A catheter is a flexible hollow tube which allows urine to drain from your bladder. The catheter is inserted through the urethra (urine tube) or through a small cut in your abdomen into the bladder (Suprapubic catheter).

### Urethral Catheter

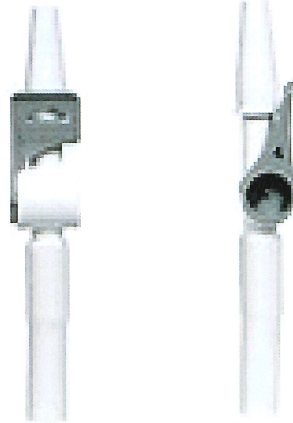


### Suprapubic Catheter





Urine drains from your bladder through the catheter into a drainage bag, or is connected to a catheter valve that is opened regularly to drain the urine. Once the catheter is in place, a small balloon at the catheter tip is inflated with water to stop the catheter from falling out of your bladder. Anchor the catheter with a catheter securing device on your thigh.



## Care of your catheter

- Always wash your hands with warm soapy water and dry them well before and after handling your catheter and drainage bags.
- Wash the area around your catheter with mild soap and water and pat the area dry morning and night, and after you have opened your bowels. Avoid soaps that contain a high pH because they may cause irritation to the site.
- Always keep your bag below bladder level to ensure good drainage and prevent backflow. Avoid kinking the tubing.
- Empty the bag when it is 2/3rds full to prevent the weight of the bag dragging on the catheter.
- Empty the bag into the toilet or a container by opening the bottom tap/valve. Do not forget to close the tap/valve once finished.
- Avoid disconnecting your leg bag catheter from the catheter bag (other than routine bag and valve changes), even when bathing or showering because this will increase your risk of an infection.





## Changing leg bags and valves

- Wash hands with soap and water before and after your leg bag change
- Once a week, replace the leg bag or catheter valve with a new sterile product
- Empty your leg bag/open your valve and empty your bladder before your change
- Be aware urine might drip from the catheter when changing the leg bag or catheter valve
- To prevent infection avoid touching the connecting ends
- Dispose in household rubbish

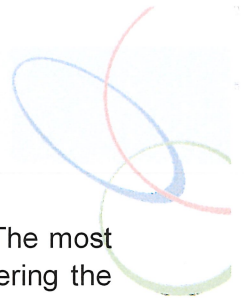


## Night bag care

- The night bag is attached directly onto the bottom of the leg bag for use overnight. When the leg bag is attached to the night bag open the tap/valve. It holds more urine so you do not have to get up and empty the bag at night.
- In the morning, wash and dry your hands, carefully remove the night drainage bag from the leg bag.
- Close the outlet before disconnecting the night bag. Wash out with warm soapy water and rinse.

The night bag should be disposed of every 7 days by placing it inside a plastic bag and discarding in the household rubbish.





## Minimising Risk of Infection

- When you have a catheter inserted, personal hygiene becomes extremely important. The most common problem when using a catheter is urinary tract infection due to bacteria entering the bladder via the catheter.
- Men should pull back their foreskin carefully and wash thoroughly. Remember to pull the foreskin forward after washing.
- Don't use strong soaps, powder, cream, antiseptics, antiperspirants, bubble bath or bath salts around your catheter.

## Bowel Care

- Constipation and straining can affect the drainage of your catheter
- Maintain a diet high in fruit, vegetables, cereals and grains to avoid constipation
- Drink at least 1.5 to 2 litres of fluids every day, unless your doctor has advised you to limit your fluids
- A laxative may be required to keep your bowel motions soft

## Sexual Activity

- If you are a female with a urethral catheter, anchor your catheter to your leg with tape to avoid pulling.
- If you are a male with a urethral catheter, use a condom and anchor your catheter to avoid pulling. Water based lubricant is preferred.
- If you have an abdominal catheter (Suprapubic catheter), make sure the catheter is anchored to the side of your abdomen to avoid pulling on your catheter.
- Empty your drainage bag or catheter valve before sexual activity.
- If you have any other concerns or questions speak to your Nurse or Doctor

## Potential Problems

### Bladder Spasms

These are not uncommon, particularly when the catheter is first inserted. These will generally settle over time. If the spasms continue or accompany any of the following symptoms, contact your continence nurse, local doctor or specialist.

### Dark or Smelly Urine

Dark smelly urine usually means that you are not drinking enough. Drink at least 1.5 - 2 litres of fluid every day unless your doctor has advised you to limit your fluids. Spread your drinks throughout the day. Water is best!

### Infection Prevention

Signs of infections include:

- Cloudy, bloody or strong smelly urine.
- Feeling unwell, fevers, chills or shaking.
- Pain in your bladder, pelvis, or back
- The insertion site shows redness or discharges pus

***If any of these symptoms occur, arrange an appointment to see your local doctor as soon as possible.***





## No Drainage from Catheter

Troubleshooting:

- Check if the tubing bent or kinked
- Check that the bag is below the bladder level
- Check if there is something in the tubing that is stopping drainage
- Drink more fluids as recommended
- Try moving around, this may dislodge the blockage
- If you are having difficulty passing bowel motions, refer to page 6 on bowel care
- If no urine has passed in four hours, you are experiencing pain, or the desire to pass urine - contact your local doctor or present to the Emergency Department

## If the catheter falls out

- Immediately contact your specialist (during office hours) or district nurse (if involved with your care at home) or attend the nearest emergency department of your local hospital.
- Suprapubic catheters must be replaced urgently – **DO NOT delay replacement.**
- If you have your own supply take 1-2 catheters with a leg bag and or catheter valve to the hospital.

## Catheter Supplies:

If you have a catheter inserted while in hospital, on discharge the hospital should provide catheter supplies as needed (for up to 30 days).

You will need: Sterile leg bags or catheter valves, sterile night bags and anchoring devices/straps.

Your continence service or district nurse can assist with ordering ongoing catheter supplies.

You may be eligible for financial assistance. Supplies may also be purchased from:

- **Independence Australia: 1300 788 855**
- **BrightSky: 1300 88 66 01**

## When you are Discharged from Hospital:

- If you need assistance with catheter care you can be referred to your local District Nursing Service.
- You will be scheduled for a follow up appointment to see your urologist or specialist.
- If your catheter is temporary, your doctor will inform you as to how long it needs to be left in.
- If your catheter is permanent, it will need to be changed every 4-12 weeks.
- Catheter changes can be done by the urologist, general practitioner or nurse.





## Services to Contact

Albury Wodonga Health  
Wodonga Continence Service  
73-75 Vermont St, Wodonga  
Phone: 02 6051 7400

Gateway Health  
Continence Service  
45-47 Mackay St, Wangaratta  
Phone: 03 5723 2070

Albury Wodonga Health  
Albury Continence Service  
596 Smollett St, Albury  
Phone: 02 6058 1800

Nexus Primary Health  
Continence Service  
72 Ferguson St, Broadford  
Phone: 03 5784 5555

NCN Health – Cobram Campus  
Continence Service  
24-32 Broadway Street, Cobram  
Phone: 03 5871 0777

Northeast Health Wangaratta  
Continence Clinic  
4-12 Clark St, Wangaratta  
Phone: 03 5722 5333

Goulburn Valley Health  
Regional Continence Service  
121-133 Corio St, Shepparton  
Phone: 1800 222 582 Press 2

Northeast Health Wangaratta  
Community Care Centre Continence  
4-12 Clark St, Wangaratta  
Phone: 03 5722 5555

Goulburn Valley Health  
Continence Clinic  
2-48 Graham St, Shepparton  
Phone: 1800 222 282

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