



QUESTIONS QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ANSWERS

What is a Urinary Catheter?

Your doctor has ordered a urinary catheter (kath-e-ter). This is a thin rubber tube placed into the bladder. The bladder is the organ which stores pee (urine). Urine drains from the bladder through the catheter into a bag outside the body. The urinary catheter is helpful for your treatment. It can be used:

- if you cannot urinate on your own
- to measure the amount of urine you make
- during and after some types of surgery
- during some tests of the kidneys and bladder

Sometimes a urinary catheter can cause a urinary tract infection, or UTI for short. The urinary tract includes:

- the bladder which stores urine, and
- the kidneys which filter the blood to make urine

Germs do not normally live in these organs. But if germs find a way there an infection can occur. Germs can:

- come from your belly. They do no harm there.
- enter the urinary tract when the catheter is put in the bladder
- enter the urinary tract while the catheter remains in the bladder

What are the signs of a UTI?

- burning or pain below the belly
- fever
- bloody urine
- burning while urinating

- need to urinate more often than normal after the catheter is taken out

How is a UTI treated?

Your doctor will give you germ killing medicines called antibiotics (an-ti-bi-ot-icks).

What will doctors and nurses do to prevent UTI's?

They will:

- put in catheters only when necessary and remove them as soon as possible.
- clean their hands. The only safe way to clean hands is by using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- clean your skin in the area were the catheter will be put in with a germ killer.
- Attach the tube to your leg to avoid pulling on it
- avoid twisting or bending the catheter
- empty the bag often
- be sure the drainage spout does not touch anything while the bag is being emptied.
- not disconnect the catheter and drain tube unless necessary. This will help prevent germs from getting into the catheter.

When possible other ways to drain urine may be used. These include:

- using external catheters in men. These look like condoms and are placed over the penis
- putting a temporary catheter in to drain urine and removing it right away

What can you do to prevent UTI?

- Clean your hands before and after catheter care.
- Keep your urine bag below the level of your bladder.
- Do not tug or pull on the catheter.
- Empty the bag often,
- Do not twist or kink the catheter.
- Ask you care giver each day if you still need the catheter.

What do you need to know when you go home?

Some patients go home with a urinary catheter. Your doctor or nurse will tell you how to care for it.

- Make sure you understand everything they tell you. If you do not, **ask questions.**
- Make sure you know who to contact if you have questions or problems.

When do you need to call the doctor?

Call your doctor right away if you have any of the signs of a UTI such as:

- burning or pain below the belly
- fever
- need to urinate more often than normal

There are medicines to treat a UTI. The catheter may have to be taken out. The UTI may be serious. It is important to follow all directions.

Our doctors serve with a deep respect for all. Their goal is to give the best care and education whether or not a person can pay.

**St. Vincent Charity Hospital
Center**

2351 East. 22nd Street
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
TTY: Ohio Relay 1-800-750-0750

St. Luke's Health Care

11201 Shaker Boulevard
Cleveland, Ohio 44104

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