

# Indwelling Urinary Catheters Patient Information Leaflet

This leaflet provides advice and support to patients and carers about Indwelling Urinary Catheters and Key Contacts



Continence Team - 01472 256702 or 256703

Single Point of Access (SPA) / GP out of hours - 01472 256256

Community Nursing Team - 01472 256780

# What is a catheter?

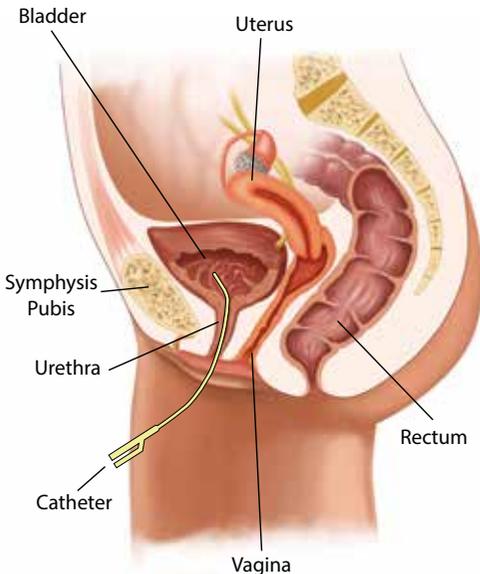
A catheter is a thin, hollow, flexible tube designed to drain urine from the bladder. Any catheter which is inserted into the bladder and allowed to remain in the bladder is called an indwelling catheter.

The catheter is kept in place by a small balloon at its tip filled with sterile water, which prevents it from falling out.

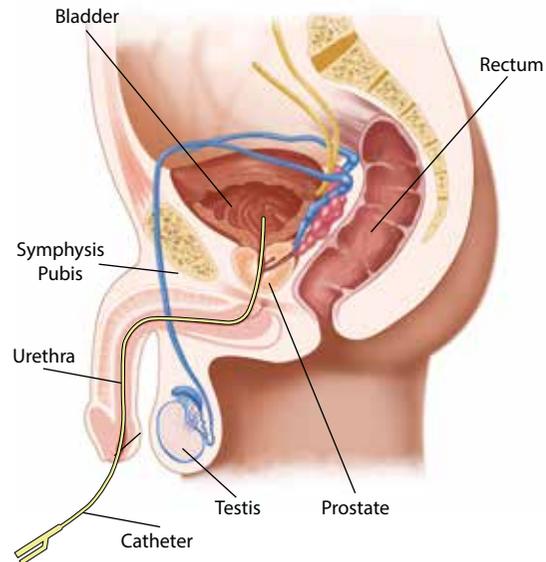
It is inserted into the bladder through the urethra (water pipe). This is a small opening above the vagina in women and runs through the length of the penis in men.

In some people it may be necessary to insert the catheter into the bladder through an incision (cut) through the abdominal wall. This is called a suprapubic catheter.

**Female**



**Male**



# Why are catheters used?

Some people find it difficult to empty their bladder if it's not working properly, so a catheter is inserted to drain urine away. Catheters are also used before or after surgery, because of an injury, for instilling medication into the bladder and occasionally for managing urinary leakage if this cannot be managed in another way.

Having a urinary catheter is a helpful treatment for some people but sometimes problems can occur. Proper care of your catheter will reduce the risk of getting problems.



## Reducing the risk of urine infections

Having a catheter increases your risk of getting a urine infection as it is easier for bacteria to enter your bladder.

Catheter infections can be serious and difficult to treat. Sometimes the infections can be life threatening.

Hand washing and keeping clean helps reduce the risk of getting urine infections.

### Hand washing

- ✓ You should always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before and after dealing with your catheter and drainage bags.
- ✓ Carers should always wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water before and after dealing with your catheter and drainage bags and should also wear a new pair of disposable gloves each time.

### Keeping clean

- ✓ Wash the area where the catheter enters your body every day with mild soap and water.
- ✓ Wash the area after you have opened your bowels and if the area gets dirty.
- ✓ Avoid using talc or creams.
- ✓ Have a daily wash, if possible a shower or bath.
- ✓ Do not remove your leg bag when you have a shower or bath and ensure that your catheter bag is emptied prior.
- ✓ Dry your leg bag by patting it with a clean towel.

**Contact your nurse or the continence team if you would like to discuss any other concerns about your catheter.**

**The contact details are on the back of the leaflet.**



### Contact your nurse to discuss if it is possible to:

- ✓ Try without your catheter;
- ✓ Use a catheter valve (a discreet product to use instead of a leg bag); or
- ✓ Do intermittent catheterisation (use a removable catheter to periodically drain urine from your bladder – this may have less risk of urine infections).

### Contact your nurse if you would like advice on:

- ✓ Sex with having a catheter.
- ✓ Disposal of continence products.
- ✓ Advice for patients using catheter valves.



**Care Plus Group**  
41-43 Kent Street  
Grimsby  
DN32 7DH

[www.careplusgroup.org](http://www.careplusgroup.org)

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This leaflet is available on request in other formats and languages, please contact the Quality Team on 01472 266966.