

# Indwelling Urinary Catheter Care

Your child has an indwelling urinary catheter, which drains the bladder.

## What is an indwelling urinary catheter?

An indwelling urinary catheter is a tube that carries your child's urine from the bladder to a bag for disposal. This tube either comes out through your child's stomach (suprapubic or "SP" catheter) or out through the urethra (Foley catheter). It has a small balloon on the end inside your child's bladder or may be stitched in place to keep it from falling out. Urine flows from your child's bladder through this tube into a drainage bag.

## How do I care for the catheter?

- Always wash your hands with soap and water before and after touching the catheter.
- Keep the catheter taped securely to keep it from pulling out. The catheter can be taped to the upper thigh (for girls and young boys) or to the stomach (for older boys).
- Wash the area where the catheter leaves the body every day with mild soap and water. Put antibiotic ointment (like Neosporin) on the exit site after you wash it.
- It is OK for your child to take a shower or bathe while the tube is in.
- It is important to keep the bag below the level of your child's bladder and off the floor at all times. This will prevent urine from flowing back into the bladder.
- Avoid kinking the catheter. This will block the flow of urine.
- Empty the bag regularly, when it is about half full. This will prevent urine from flowing back into the bladder.
- Wash the urine container every day with soap and hot water.
- Encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids.

## How should I care for the drainage bag?

- You may be given two drainage bags, one for day and one for night.
- When changing bags, clean the end of the catheter tube with an alcohol swab for 10 seconds. Let it dry for 10 seconds, and then connect the tube to the bag.
- Clean the bags with hydrogen peroxide or bleach solution (4 parts water to 1 part bleach) by soaking them for at least 2 hours. Then, rinse out with water and reuse. Dry and store on a dry, clean towel.

- You should replace the bag if there is a hole in the bag or if the bag is more than 30 days old.

### **What if my child's doctor asks me to irrigate the SP catheter?**

Irrigating a catheter means to flush saline water into the bladder through the catheter with a syringe. This rinses the catheter and bladder and allows the catheter to drain more easily.

- Your child's nurse will show you how to irrigate the SP, and soon you will be able to do this on your own.
- Always wash your hands with soap and water before and after touching the catheter.
- Clean the connection with an alcohol swab for 10 seconds. Let it dry for 10 seconds, and then disconnect the catheter from the drainage bag.
- Slowly push \_\_\_\_\_ cc of saline with a clean Asepto syringe. Pull back slowly until you see urine. Please see the Seattle Children's flyer called [Making Sterile Distilled Water and Sterile Saline Solutions at Home](#).
- You may be asked to repeat this 2 or 3 times in a row and/or several times per day.

### **What happens after the Foley catheter is removed?**

Once the catheter is removed, your child may have a burning feeling when peeing for the first time. If your child has a problem peeing, have your child sit and pee in a tub of warm water. Many small children will pee when they fall asleep.

### **What happens after the SP is removed?**

The SP exit site should close within 48 hours. A gauze pad can be taped over the site if urine leaks during this time. Replace the gauze as it gets full of liquid.

### **When should I call the doctor?**

Please call your child's doctor if:

- The catheter comes out
- The catheter stops draining urine
- The SP exit site is red or has smelly drainage
- Your child has pain in their stomach area or back
- Your child has nausea or is vomiting
- Your child hasn't peed for 6 to 8 hours after the catheter was removed
- After the catheter is removed, your child has a burning sensation, urgency with peeing or needs to pee often (every hour or more)
- Your child shows signs of a urinary tract infection, such as:
  - Fever of 101.5 degrees or chills

## Indwelling Urinary Catheter Care

---

### To Learn More

- Urology Scheduling  
206-987-2509
- Paging Operator  
206-987-2131
- Ask your child's nurse  
or doctor
- [www.seattlechildrens.org](http://www.seattlechildrens.org)

- Irritability
- Smelly, cloudy or bloody urine
- Wetting accidents if otherwise potty trained

If you have questions or concerns, please call the nurse in the Urology Clinic at 206-987-2509. After 5 p.m. or on weekends call the paging operator at 206-987-2131 and ask for the Urologist on-call.

### Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital,  
ask your child's nurse.
- From outside the  
hospital, call the  
toll-free Family  
Interpreting Line  
1-866-583-1527.  
Tell the interpreter  
the name or extension  
you need.
- For Deaf and hard of  
hearing callers  
206-987-2280 (TTY).

---

Seattle Children's offers interpreter services for Deaf, hard of hearing or non-English speaking patients, family members and legal representatives free of charge. Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider.

© 1994, 1997, 2003, 2007, 2009, 2010 Seattle Children's, Seattle, Washington. All rights reserved.

---