

Suprapubic Catheter Care

Your child has a suprapubic catheter, which drains the bladder.

What is a suprapubic (SP) catheter?

A suprapubic catheter, also called a SP catheter, is a tube that carries your child's urine from the bladder to a bag for disposal. This tube comes out through a small hole in your child's stomach (suprapubic or "SP"). A SP catheter may be needed for a variety of reasons, such as:

- Leakage (urinary incontinence)
 - Not being able to urinate (urinary retention)
 - Surgery or another health problem
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How do I care for the catheter?

It is very important to take good care of your child's catheter, including the tube and drainage system. Keep all parts of the drainage system very clean to prevent infection.

To clean the area where the catheter enters your child's body, follow these steps:

1. Wash your hands with soap and water. It is not necessary to wear gloves.
2. Wash the catheter where it leaves the body every day with mild soap and warm water. This may also be done in the shower. Take care that you do not pull on the catheter.
3. Inspect the skin at least once a day. A small amount of redness and clear drainage is normal.
4. If there is dried blood or mucous on the catheter that does not come off with soap and water, use hydrogen peroxide to gently wipe the catheter with a cotton ball or gauze pad.
5. Rinse the skin and catheter with warm water. Pat dry with a towel.
6. You may place a dressing over the catheter site if you wish. It is not required, but some people feel more comfortable doing so.
7. Keep the catheter secured to your child's belly (using tape, Tegaderm, catheter holder or other) to prevent it from being pulled out.
8. Wash your hands with soap and water.

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To Learn More

- Urology Scheduling
206-987-2509
- Paging Operator
206-987-2131
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your 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.



How do I care for the drainage bag?

- You may be given 2 different types of drainage bags, one for day and one for night.
- Keep the drainage system below the level of the bladder so the urine does not back up.
- Keep the drainage bag off the floor.
- The bag should be emptied when $\frac{2}{3}$ full or at least every 8 hours.
- A leg bag will allow your child to wear regular clothes and be free to play or work during the day. Remember that because it is small, it will need to be emptied often. Use a larger drainage bag for overnight.
- Be sure there are no kinks or sharp bends in the tubing that may prevent urine draining from the bladder to the bag.

How do I change the drainage bag?

If you will be changing drainage bags while at home, a nurse will show you how to follow these steps:

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Disconnect the tubing from the catheter.
3. Insert the new drainage bag tubing into the catheter.
4. If you are going to reuse the bag, cover the connection site with a sterile cap or gauze. The bag must be kept in a clean place.
5. Change the drainage bag once a week or sooner if it becomes dirty or smelly.

How do I clean the drainage bag?

1. Make a bleach solution (4 parts water to 1 part bleach)
2. Soak the bag for at least 2 hours
3. Rinse with water
4. Dry and store on a clean towel
5. Replace the bag if there is a hole or if it is more than 30 days old

What if the doctor asks me to drain the catheter into a diaper?

If your child is not potty trained, your doctor might instruct you to drain the catheter into a “double diaper.” The double diaper technique keeps the catheter clean and allows it to continuously drain. Your child’s nurse will show you how to do this. To double diaper:

- Your child will wear a normal sized diaper on the inside.
- On the outside, your child will wear a diaper 1 size larger.
- The catheter will drain into the outer diaper so the catheter does not get soiled if your child has a bowel movement.

How do I irrigate the catheter?	<p>Irrigating a catheter means to flush saline or sterile water into the bladder through the catheter with a syringe. This rinses the catheter and bladder and allows the catheter to drain more easily.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your child’s nurse will show you how to irrigate the catheter, 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.• Disconnect the catheter from the drainage bag.• Put a sterile top or gauze over the open end of the drainage bag until ready to reconnect to the catheter.• Slowly push 15mL of saline or sterile water with a clean piston syringe. Pull back slowly until you see urine.• For directions to make saline or sterile water at home, read our handout “Making Sterile Distilled Water and Sterile Saline Solutions at Home.” seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE610.pdf .• You may be asked to repeat this 2 or 3 times in a row and/or several times per day.
How do I change the catheter?	<p>For directions on how to change the catheter at home, read our handout “Changing Your Suprapubic Catheter.” www.seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE2041.pdf .</p>
How do I get the supplies?	<p>We will give you 3 days of supplies when you go home from the hospital. To get more supplies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will tell you what supplies you need and help you find a medical supply company that accepts your insurance.• We will give you a prescription for the supplies.• If you are running low on supplies, you will order them directly from your medical supply company.
What happens after the catheter is removed?	<p>The small hole where the catheter comes out should close within 48 hours. You can put a gauze pad over it if urine leaks during this time. Replace the gauze if it is soiled. No baths or swimming for 48 hours after the catheter is removed, but it is OK to shower.</p>

When should I call the doctor?

Please call your child's doctor if:

- The catheter comes out unexpectedly
- The catheter stops draining urine
- The SP exit site is red or has smelly drainage
- A large amount of urine is leaking around the catheter (a small amount of leaking is normal)
- Your child has pain in their stomach area or back, not relieved with medication
- Your child has nausea or vomiting
- Your child shows signs of a urinary tract infection, such as
 - Fever of 101.5 degrees or chills
 - Irritability
 - Smelly, cloudy or bloody urine
 - Wetting accidents if otherwise potty trained
- Your child has not peed for 6 to 8 hours after the catheter was removed
- You are unable to insert a new catheter when changing it at home