

How to Care for Your Urinary (Foley) Catheter at Home/Female - The James

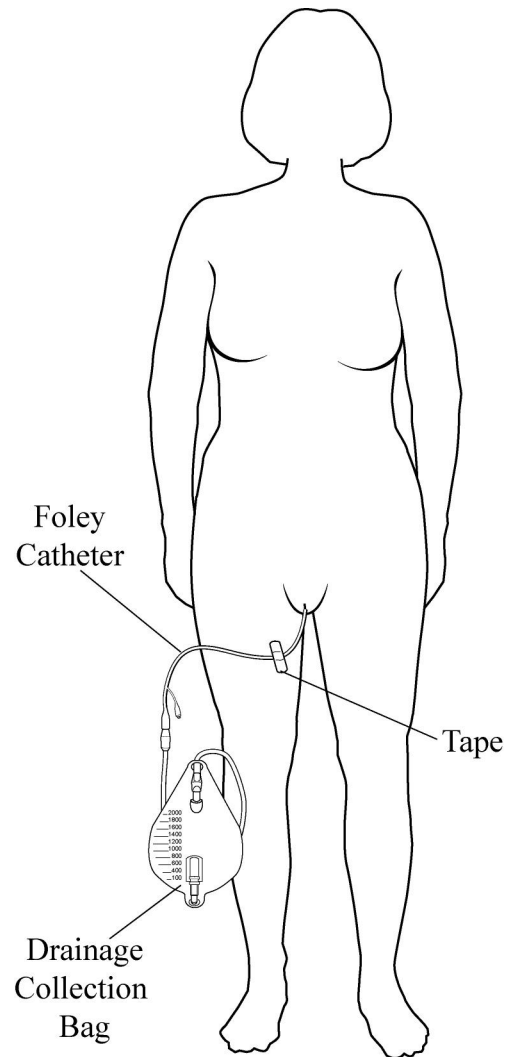
A urinary catheter is a long, thin, flexible tube put into your urethra and goes into your bladder to drain urine. It may also be called a Foley or an indwelling catheter.

This tube has a small balloon at the end filled with water. The balloon keeps the catheter in place inside your bladder. The catheter is connected to tubing that drains urine into a collection bag outside your body.

How to Clean Around Your Catheter

Wash around your catheter each day.

1. Gather your supplies.
 - Soap and water
 - Washcloth and towel
 - Leg strap
2. Wash your hands with soap and warm water. If this is not possible, you may also use alcohol-based hand sanitizer to clean your hands.
3. Look carefully at the place where the catheter leaves your body. Check for any **pain, swelling, redness, or drainage, like blood or pus**. It may help to use a mirror.
4. Use soap and water to gently wash the area around your catheter. **Do not** pull on your catheter. Rinse well and dry.



This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

5. Use your leg strap to secure your collection bag to your leg.
6. Wash your hands with soap and warm water. If this is not possible, you may also use alcohol-based hand sanitizer to clean your hands.

How to Empty Your Urine Collection Bag

Empty your urine collection bag when it is just over half full. You will need to empty the smaller leg bag more often than your larger bag. You should also empty the bag when you go from one type of collection bag to another. For more information, ask your nurse for the patient education handout: [Leg Bag for Your Urinary \(Foley\) Catheter](#).

1. Gather your supplies:
 - Soap and water
 - Empty container with measurement marks
 - Clean paper towel or tissue
 - Urine record log
2. Remove the drain spout from the holder on the bottom of your bag.
3. Hold the spout over the container and open the clamp on the tube. Let the urine empty into your container.
4. When your collection bag is empty, **close the clamp** on your drain tube. Use a clean paper towel or tissue to dry the end of the drain spout and put it back into the holder.
5. Your doctor may ask you to measure your urine. If so, write down the amount of urine in the container. Make a note of the color and smell of the urine. Urine should be clear and have a yellow color with a mild smell. Here is an example of what to write down:

Date	Time	Amount Collected (ounces, mL's or cc's)	Color, Smell

6. Pour the urine into the toilet. Rinse the container with water and pour the water into the toilet. Flush the toilet. Set your container on a clean paper towel until you need it again.

7. Wash your hands well with soap and warm water. If this is not possible, you may also use alcohol-based hand sanitizer to clean your hands.

How to Care for Your Urine Collection Bag

You will need to remove and clean your urine collection bag every other day with a mixture of white vinegar and water, unless told otherwise by a member of your health care team.

1. Rinse the collection bag with water and drain.
2. In a separate container or bowl, mix 2 cups of vinegar with 6 cups of water.
3. Pour the vinegar water mix into your collection bag and swish it around in the bag. Lay the bag in your bathtub or sink to soak for about 30 minutes. Be sure the tubing that is attached to the bag is full of the mixture.
4. Drain the mixture out of the bag and tubing and rinse with clean water. Dry the outside of the bag and tubing.
5. Hang the bag in the shower or tub to dry.

It is important to change to a new collection bag at least every 2 weeks, or more often if told by your doctor.

When to call your doctor:

Call your doctor if you have any of the following:

- Burning or pain in your lower abdomen (belly)
- Pain or aching in your back, around the area of your kidneys
- Chills or fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher
- Pain, redness, swelling, itching or burning near or where the catheter leaves your body
- Feeling that your bladder is full or that your catheter is plugged
- Urine that looks bloody, dark golden or cloudy
- No drainage of urine

- Urine leaking around your tube
- Confusion or changes in how you act
- Your catheter falls out
- **If you had surgery** and you have **more** urine leaking or bloody drainage than you were told to expect

If you need to call the doctor:

If you call your doctor, have the following information ready:

- Your temperature
- The amount and appearance of your urine
- Try to describe your problem as detailed as you can. For example, if the problem is pain, be able to tell your doctor where the pain is, what the pain feels like (sharp, dull, burning) and when pain occurs.

For more information on how to prevent infection and care for your urinary catheter, ask your nurse for the patient education handout [How to Prevent an Infection with Your Urinary \(Foley\) Catheter - The James.](#)