

# Caring for Your Suprapubic Catheter (SPC)

For people with cancer and their caregivers

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**This booklet will give you information about:**

- Suprapubic catheters
- Drainage bags
- How to care for your catheter
- How to empty and change your drainage bags
- How to prevent infection

**You must call your healthcare team right away if:**

- Your catheter comes out. Do not try to replace it yourself.
- You have a fever of 38.3°C (100.9°F) or higher.
- You are making less urine (pee) than usual.
- Your urine (pee):
  - Smells bad
  - Has blood in it
- You are feeling overly tired.
- Your bladder feels tender.
- You feel pain around the side of your body from your upper abdomen to your back.

**If you cannot reach your healthcare team, go to your nearest emergency room right away.**



You can call your healthcare team at:

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# Table of Contents

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|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>What is a suprapubic catheter? .....</b>         | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>What are drainage bags? .....</b>                | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Caring for your catheter.....</b>                | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Emptying and changing your drainage bag.....</b> | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>Preventing infection .....</b>                   | <b>13</b> |
| <b>Notes.....</b>                                   | <b>14</b> |

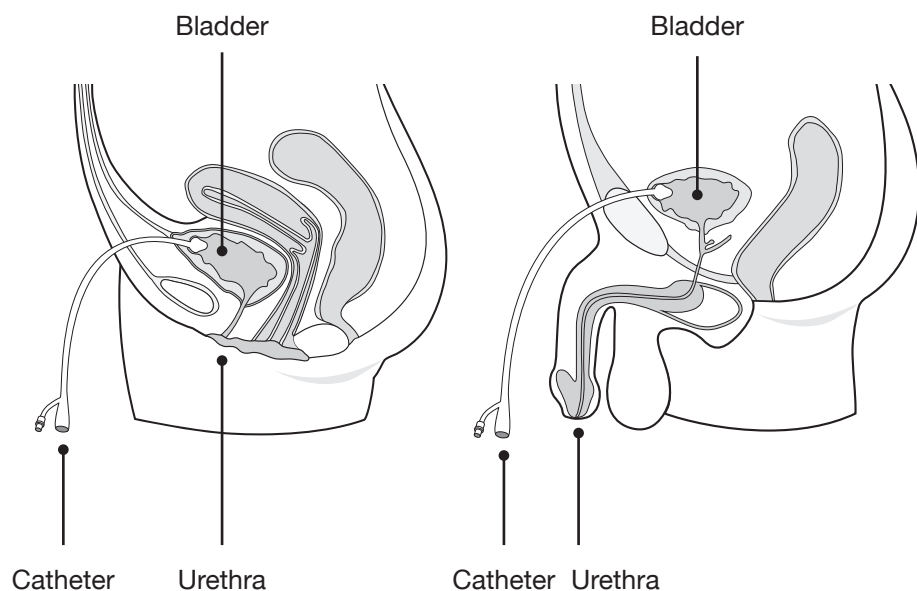
# What is a suprapubic catheter?

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A suprapubic catheter is used to empty your bladder. It is a flexible tube that is inserted a few inches below your navel (belly button) to your bladder, just above your pubic bone. It drains urine (pee) from your bladder into a drainage bag.

The catheter is held in place inside of your bladder by a small balloon filled with water.

Suprapubic catheters are usually more comfortable than urinary or Foley catheters because they are not inserted through sensitive tissue. You will need to change your catheter every 4 to 6 weeks.



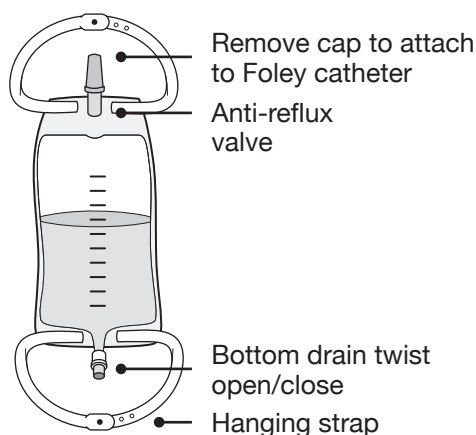
# What are drainage bags?

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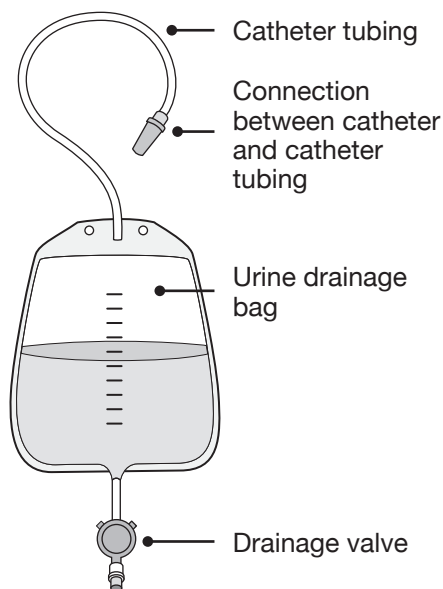
Drainage bags are where you will empty your bladder. You will need leg bags and night drainage bags.

- A **leg bag** is a smaller bag that is used during the day. This allows you to move more freely and is easily hidden under your clothes. Leg bags are available in different sizes. They can be purchased at drug stores and medical supply firms.
- A **night drainage bag** is a larger bag with longer tubing that is used at night while you are sleeping.

## Leg bag:



## Night drainage bag:



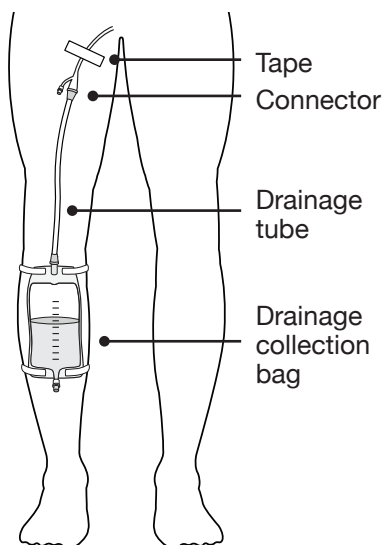
# Caring for your catheter

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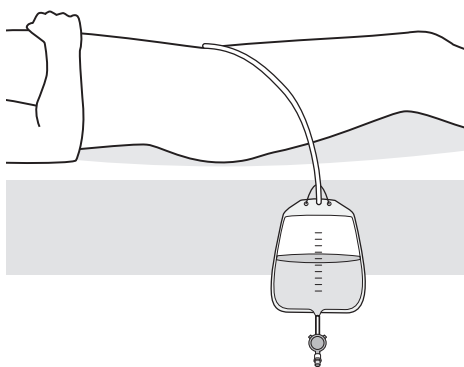
## How do I wear it properly?

- Tape the catheter (tube) comfortably to your leg. Most people like to tape the catheter to their inner upper thigh. It should not be pulled tight. If the tape starts to irritate or bother your skin, you can tape the catheter to your other leg.
- Keep the tube free from kinks or loops so that the urine (pee) can flow easily.
- Always wear your drainage bag below your waist so your urine (pee) can flow downwards.

### Leg bag:



### Night drainage bag:



## **How do I wash the area around my catheter and tube?**

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Use a mild soap like hand soap to gently wash the area around the catheter tube (where it enters your body), and your genital area.
  - If you have a penis, pull back your foreskin, if needed, and clean the area around the penis and scrotum.
  - If you have a vulva, separate the labia and clean the area from front to back.
3. Rinse area around the tube with water.
4. Pat dry the tube and area around the tube with a clean washcloth or paper towel.
5. Check for signs of infection like swelling, redness, blood or pus. For women, you may need to use a mirror.

## **How often do I wash the catheter and area around my catheter tube?**

Wash the areas around your catheter in the morning, evening and after every bowel movement (poo) as you may have some urine (pee) leak around your catheter area.

## Can I take a shower with my catheter?

Yes, you can shower while you have your catheter. **Do not** take a bath as it may put you at risk for infection.

Clean the catheter from where it enters your body and then down, away from your body. Dry well with a clean washcloth or paper towel.

Shower while wearing your night drainage bag.

### Helpful Tips:

- **Stay hydrated!** Drink 8-10 glasses of water throughout the day, if your care team did not give you limits on how much fluid you can drink.
- **Keep track of:**
  - How much water you are drinking
  - How much you urinate (pee)
  - What your urine (pee) looks like

**Do not use lubricant, powder or alcohol wipes to the genital area or on the catheter tube.**

**You may need to wear your catheter tube for many days or weeks.**

**Your healthcare team will let you know when you will need to change your catheter tube.**



# Emptying and changing your drainage bag

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## Every morning

You will need to (1) empty your night drainage bag, (2) disconnect your night drainage bag and connect your leg bag to your catheter, (3) secure your leg bag to your leg, and (4) wash your night drainage bag.

### ☐ Empty your night drainage bag:

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Unclamp the drainage tube and remove it from the sleeve. **Do not touch the drain opening with your fingers.**
3. Drain all the urine (pee) into the toilet.
4. Clamp the tube and put it into the sleeve on the drainage bag.
5. Wash your hands with soap and water.

### ☐ Disconnect your night drainage bag and connect your leg bag to the catheter:

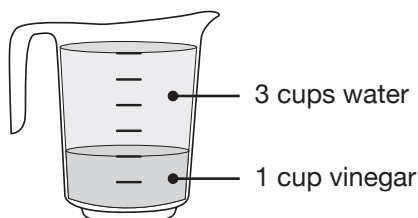
1. Remove the protective cap from the leg drainage bag. **Do not touch the ends of any tubes.** Keep the protective cap in a safe place.
2. Pinch off the catheter using your thumb and forefinger, and take off (disconnect) the night drainage bag from the catheter.
3. Cover the end of the night drainage bag with its protective cap.
4. Connect the leg bag to catheter.

## ❑ Secure your leg bag to your leg:

1. Place your leg bag on your leg and fasten the straps comfortably.
2. Always wear your leg bag below the level of your bladder.

## ❑ Wash your night drainage bag:

1. Rinse the bag with soap and water.
2. Fill the bag halfway with a solution of vinegar and water.  
Shake the bag and let it sit for 10 minutes.
  - To make the vinegar solution, mix 1 cup (250 ml) of vinegar with 3 cups (750 ml) of water.



3. Clean the cap with the vinegar solution.
4. Cover the end of the night drainage bag tubing with the cap.
5. Drain the vinegar solution from the bottom of the bag.
6. Hang it to dry. **Leave the drainage end (bottom) open to allow the bag to air dry.**
7. Wash your hands with soap and water.

## Before going to bed

You will need to (1) empty your leg bag, (2) disconnect your leg bag and connect your night drainage bag to your catheter, (3) wash your leg bag, and (4) hang your night drainage bag while you sleep.

### ☐ Empty your leg bag:

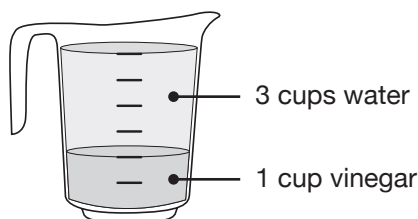
1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Twist the cap to open the drainage tube. **Do not touch the drain opening with your fingers.**
3. Drain all the urine (pee) into the toilet.
4. Twist the cap to close the drainage tube.
5. Wash your hands with soap and water.

### ☐ Disconnect your leg bag and connect your night drainage bag to the catheter:

1. Remove the protective cap from the night drainage bag. **Do not touch the ends of any tubes.**
2. Keep the protective cap in a safe place.
3. Pinch off the catheter using your thumb and forefinger, and take out the tube that is in the catheter.
4. Cover the end of the leg bag with its protective cap.
5. Connect the night drainage bag to catheter.

## ❑ Wash your leg bag:

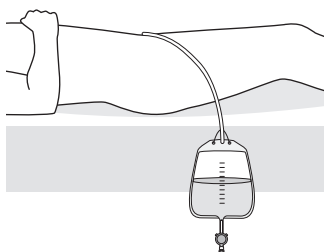
1. Rinse the bag with soap and water.
2. Fill the bag halfway with a solution of vinegar and water. Shake the bag and let it sit for 10 minutes.
  - To make the vinegar solution, mix 1 cup (250 ml) of vinegar with 3 cups (750 ml) of water.



3. Clean the cap with the vinegar solution.
4. Cover the end of the night drainage bag tubing with the cap.
5. Drain the vinegar solution from the bottom of the bag.
6. Hang it to dry. **Leave the drainage end (bottom) open to allow the bag to air dry.**
7. Wash your hands with soap and water.

## ❑ Hang your night drainage bag:

1. Hang your night drainage bag over the side of your bed.
2. Make sure it is hung below the level of your bladder so that your urine (pee) flows easily.



# Preventing infection

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Anyone who has a catheter is at risk of a urinary tract infection. Bacteria can get into your urinary tract from the area around the catheter tube (where it enters your body).

## How to prevent infection?

- Wash your hands before and after caring for the catheter and drainage bags.
- Do not disconnect the catheter tubes for any reason unless you are changing drainage bags.
- Keep the drainage bag off the floor. If the bag rests on the floor, put a clean towel underneath it first.
- Always keep your drainage bag below your waist so your urine (pee) can flow downwards.
- Make sure the the area around the catheter tube (where it enters your body) is kept clean.

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