

# Supporting you in the management of your urinary catheter



MANFRED SAUER CARE  
NHS Prescription Dispensing Service

A urinary catheter is a hollow, flexible tube usually used to empty the bladder and collect urine in a drainage bag. They are fitted by an appropriately trained doctor or nurse.

The catheter can either be inserted through the tube that carries urine out of the bladder (urethral catheter) or through a small opening made in your lower tummy (suprapubic catheter). The catheter is kept in place by a small balloon that is inflated with sterile water inside the bladder following insertion. Your catheter may also be a long or short term one depending on why it was fitted and your medical condition.

Many people find themselves having to live with a urinary catheter and at Manfred Sauer Care we want to support you in any way possible to ensure that you remain able to live a full and satisfying life. It may well take you some time to adjust to having a catheter in place but please be reassured that help is at hand. You can speak to your nurse with any concerns you may have.

## Ensuring catheter comfort

After your catheter has been inserted it is important to make sure that there is no pulling or friction. This will ensure that you do not experience pain and discomfort from your catheter. There is a range of catheter retaining devices available on prescription to help with this and your nurse will be able to advise you on what might best suit your needs.

## Fitting and managing your drainage bags

Once your catheter has been fitted you will usually be given a leg bag which is connected to the end of your catheter and will drain the urine away from your body.

As your catheter is a 'foreign body' and can raise your risk of infection, your leg bags should always be sterile ones.

There is a wide choice of bags available and you can wear it on your calf or thigh, whichever is most comfortable and convenient for you. The bag can be secured to your leg using Velcro straps or a cotton leg sleeve depending on your preference. Your nurse will be able to advise on these. It is also worth remembering that leg bags come in varying sizes/volumes ranging from 350mls – 1300mls and with varying tube lengths.

When your bag is full it can be emptied via the tap at the bottom. Taps also vary and you will be advised on what is available so that you have a tap that you can manage as we are aware that some people have manual dexterity issues.

To avoid infection, it is important that your leg bag always remains connected to your catheter until it is due changing.

**REMEMBER: Every time you disconnect your bag there is an opportunity for bacteria to enter the system.**



It is recommended that your leg bag is changed every 5-7 days. Make sure that your new bag is sterile and that you have everything that you need before you change it. Your Manfred Sauer Nurse or your District Nurse will be able to teach you how to change your bags.

Images courtesy of LINC Medical

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## Night Drainage Bags

Two and Three litre drainage bags are available for overnight use.

Your night bag should be securely connected to the end of your leg bag and the leg bag tap opened to allow through drainage.

There are two types of night bag available; a drainable, reusable type (changed every 5-7 days) or a once only type that is disposed of daily.

Many people drain larger volumes of urine at night, so the larger capacity of a night bag is very useful. You will also be provided with a night bag stand or hanger so that your bag can stand by the side of your bed overnight.



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LINC Medical

## Catheter Valves

Catheter valves provide an alternative to leg bags. They are a very simple tap mechanism that fits directly on to the end of your catheter. The valve, when closed, prevents urine escaping from the catheter and helps the bladder work as it was intended. Valves are relatively small and discreet compared to a leg bag.

**NOTE: Catheter valves should only be used on the advice of your healthcare professional.**



## Keeping your Catheter clean

Hand hygiene is essential when you are dealing with your catheter. The catheter and entry site should be washed twice a day with soap and water and dried thoroughly.

If you notice any inflammation where your catheter enters your body, check for chafing or any other possible trauma and contact your nurse if required.

**NOTE: Avoid the use of Creams and Talcum Powder.**

Creams and powders could lead to 'clogging' and potential infection.

When you take a bath or shower, your leg bag should be emptied beforehand and remain connected. You may find it useful to have a spare pair of leg bag straps to hand so that you can fit a dry pair after bathing.

## Diet and Fluids

As always, continue to eat a normal, healthy and balanced diet.

Try to consume foods with a high fibre content (fruit, vegetables and whole grains) to avoid constipation as if you become constipated this could lead to pressure on the bladder/catheter resulting in leakage/bypassing.

It is vital that you drink plenty of fluids every day. Aim to drink at least 1 ½ to 2 litres daily and avoid excessive amounts of caffeine and alcohol. Wherever possible you should drink clear fluids i.e. Water.

Your urine should be a light straw colour so if you notice that it is darker, increase your clear fluid intake.

**NOTE: You should be aware that some medications can discolour urine and if you have concerns, consult your GP or nurse.**

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## Sexual Activity

Sexual activity should be discussed prior to a catheter being fitted. Although it is possible to maintain an active life with either a urethral or suprapubic catheter in place, the suprapubic may be preferable if the catheter is to be a long-term measure and you wish to maintain an active, intimate relationship. It is also possible for you or your partner to learn how to change your catheter so that it can be removed before intercourse and replaced again afterwards.

## Planning on Travelling

Having a catheter in place should not affect your ability to travel and lead an active, independent lifestyle. However, ALWAYS plan ahead.

Make a list of all the items you will need to take away with you. As well as your everyday items you may want to include antibacterial hand gel, some wet wipes and of course disposal bags. Keep them all together in a wash bag so that you have everything to hand when you need it.

## If flying

- Check your airline policy for carrying medical items in your luggage.
- Customs and Security officials may ask you questions about your products.
- Carry some supplies in your hand luggage.
- Remember, any liquids must be in bottles less than 100ml capacity in hand luggage.
- Carry a note from your GP explaining that you need to carry some essential healthcare products in your hand luggage

## By Sea

This is probably less likely to lead to any issues.

- Familiarise yourself with the boat/ship.
- Know where toilet facilities are located
- Ensure you know where the medical room/ first aid facilities are located.

## Trouble-Shooting

There may be times when you are concerned about your catheter. We hope that the advice below will help in dealing with any concerns you may have.

## Catheter Blockage

If you find that your catheter has not drained any urine for 2-3 hours and you are experiencing abdominal discomfort, check the following:

- Are there any kinks in the catheter or leg bag tubing?
- Is your bag below the level of your bladder?

If you have checked and the problem persists, call your nurse for assistance.

## Pain and Discomfort

Apart from immediately after the fitting of your catheter when you may experience slight discomfort you should not be in pain. If you continue to experience pain and discomfort, call your nurse as you may benefit from a catheter in a different size or material.

Remember to also check that your catheter is well supported with a catheter retaining strap.

## Bypassing

This is when urine leaks around the catheter instead of through the tube.

Check the following:

- Are there any kinks in the catheter or leg bag tubing?
- Are any items of clothing too tight and obstructing urine flow?
- Are you constipated?

Don't let having a catheter in place hold you back!



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## Dark, Smelly urine

If your urine is very dark and smelly this could be a sign of infection. Increase your fluid intake immediately and if there is no improvement consult your GP. Take a clean specimen of urine with you for testing.

Again, be aware that some forms of medication may affect the colour of your urine.

Signs of infection could include: smelly and cloudy urine, blood in the urine, increased frequency if you use a catheter valve, the sensation of urgency, lower back pains and a raised temperature.

Always seek medical advice if you are concerned that you may have a urine infection.

Your Nurse is:

Nurse Contact Number:

### Your Prescription Requirements

Manufacturer	Product	Prescription Code	Pack Size

To order further supplies on prescription please contact Manfred Sauer Care

**Freephone: 0800 999 5596**

**info@manfredsauercare.co.uk**

**Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm**

**www.manfredsauercare.co.uk**