Catheter Care

A long, narrow, hollow tube (*catheter*) used to drain the bladder requires daily maintenance care.

You can reduce the risk of infection if you:

- Limit the number of germs (*bacteria*) entering your bladder.
- Protect the tissues from injury.
- Keep the urinary pathways open.

Preventative (*prophylactic*) medications which kill germs (*antibiotics*) can **not** prevent infections.

FOLLOW THESE PROCEDURES TO LIMIT THE NUMBER OF BACTERIA ENTERING THE BLADDER

- Wash your hands for 2 minutes with soapy water before and after handling the catheter.
- Wash the perineal area and entire length of the catheter twice daily and after each bowel movement. Wash urethral opening and catheter with soap and warm water, rinse, and then wash the rectal area. Always wash from front to back.
- When changing the leg bag to bed bag or reverse, cleanse the end of the catheter where it connects to the tubing. Do this by rubbing it vigorously with an alcohol wipe.
- Clean leg bag and night drainage bags daily after use. Replace your drainage bags weekly or when you can no longer thoroughly clean them.
- Always keep the tubing and collection bag below the level of your bladder. This will allow urine to drain properly by gravity. Lifting the bag or tubing above the level of your bladder will cause unclean (*contaminated*) urine to flow back into your bladder. If you must momentarily lift the bag higher than your bladder, such as turning from side to side, pinch the catheter or tubing to prevent back-flow.
- Drink at least 6-8 glasses of water daily. This will flush bacteria out of the bladder.

PROTECT TISSUES FROM INJURY BY FOLLOWING THESE PROCEDURES:

- Tape your catheter to the inner thigh to prevent pulling. Pulling could damage internal tissues. Do not pull catheter tight when taping.
- Alternate taping sites as instructed by your caregiver.
- Place your leg bag on your lower leg, and fasten the straps securely. Do not make them so tight that they cause pressures or interfere with blood return.

KEEP THE URINARY PATHWAY OPEN:

- Check your catheter throughout the day to be sure catheter is open (*patent*) and urine is draining freely. Do not allow tubing to become kinked. Do not allow drainage bag to overfill.
- You should be seen by a caregiver to receive an evaluation if there is: leakage, lower abdominal pain, or recurrent fever.

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