

Foley Catheter Care

Your child has a Foley (urethral) catheter, which drains the bladder.

What is a urethral catheter?

A urethral catheter is a tube that carries your child's pee (urine) from the bladder to a bag or into a diaper for disposal. This tube, called a Foley catheter, comes out through your child's urethra. It has a small balloon on the end inside your child's bladder to keep it from falling out.

Urine flows from your child's bladder through this tube into a drainage bag. A urethral catheter may be needed for a variety of reasons, such as:

- Not being able to pee (urinary retention)
 - Surgery
 - Other health problems
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How do I care for the catheter?

- Always wash your hands with soap and water before and after touching the catheter.
 - Keep the catheter taped securely to keep it from pulling out. The catheter can be taped to the upper thigh.
 - Wash the urine container and the catheter where it leaves the body every day with mild soap and warm water. You can do this in the shower or bathtub. Take care that you do not pull on the catheter.
 - It is OK for your child to take a shower or bathe while the tube is in.
 - Avoid creasing (kinking) the catheter. This will block the flow of urine.
 - Encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids.
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How do I care for the drainage bag?

- We may give you 2 different types of drainage bags, 1 for day and 1 for night.
 - During the day, a small leg bag will allow your child to wear regular clothes for play or work. Use a larger drainage bag overnight.
 - For both bags, empty them regularly into a urine container or into the toilet when it is about $\frac{2}{3}$ full. Do it often during the day or at least every 8 hours for an overnight bag. This will prevent urine from flowing back into the bladder.
 - It is important to keep the bag below the level of your child's bladder and off the floor at all times. This will also prevent urine from flowing back into the bladder.
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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 change the drainage bag?

If you will be changing drainage bags 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 until you clean it.

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 in the bleach solution.
3. Rinse the bag with water.
4. Dry and store the bag on a clean towel.
5. Replace the bag if there is a hole or if it is more than 30 days old.

What if my 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?

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.

- 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 Foley catheter.
- Slowly push 15 mL of saline or sterile water with a clean piston syringe. Pull back slowly until you see urine.
- We may ask you to repeat this 2 or 3 times in a row and several times per day.

What happens after the catheter is removed?

Once you remove the catheter, your child may have a burning feeling when peeing for the first time. If your child has a problem peeing, have your child sit and pee in a tub of warm water. Many small children will pee when they fall asleep.

When should I call the doctor?

Monday to Friday, call the Urology Clinic at 206-987-2509 for questions or any of the concerns listed below. Or send a MyChart message to our nurses for non-urgent questions.

Nights, weekends and holidays, call 206-987-2000 and ask the hospital operator for the urology resident on call for urgent concerns from the following list:

- The catheter comes out
- The catheter stops draining urine
- Pain in their stomach area or back
- Feeling sick to their stomach (nausea) or vomiting
- Hasn't peed for 6 to 8 hours after the catheter was removed
- Shows signs of a urinary tract infection, such as:
 - Fever of 101.5° F (38.6° C) or chills
 - Irritable, fussy or can't get comfortable
 - Smelly, cloudy or bloody urine
 - Wetting accidents if otherwise potty trained