

# Catheter care

## Introduction

The doctor has decided that your child will go home from hospital with a catheter. A urinary catheter is a tube that carries urine from the bladder to a drainage bag. The tube either comes through your child's urethra (called an indwelling urinary catheter or 'IDC') or through your child's abdomen (called a suprapubic catheter or 'SPC'). There is a balloon at the end of the catheter that holds it inside the bladder. Looking after your child's catheter is very important.

## Equipment

You will be discharged from hospital with the following supplies:

- Alcohol swabs
- Leg bag
- Night bag
- Leg strap
- Catheter strap

## Caring for your child's catheter

- Always wash your hands before and after touching the catheter
- Ensure the catheter is taped securely to the thigh of your child using the catheter strap. Make sure the tubing does not become twisted or kinked, as this can block the flow of urine and may cause pain and discomfort for your child
- It is important to keep the catheter bag below the level of the bladder to assist with urine flow
- If your child has an IDC they can still have a bath or shower. Clean around the area where the catheter enters the body with mild soapy water. If your child has a SPC, a sponge bath is preferred. Try to keep the dressings dry.
- Encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids

## Drainage bag care

### Leg drainage bag

During the day your child's catheter can be connected to a drainage 'leg bag' and strapped to their leg using the leg strap.

- Observe how much urine has drained and the colour (should be pale yellow)
- Check the drainage bag every few hours and empty it when it is half full

To empty the leg bag: wash your hands, swab the outlet, release clamp and drain out urine into the toilet, close and swab outlet again.

### Night drainage bag

Connect the night bag to the outlet of the leg bag for overnight use. Ensure the outlets are swabbed before connection.

### Cleaning the night bag

The night drainage bag must be washed after each use.

- Ensure bag is empty
- Fill sink with warm soapy water. Open outlets and allow soapy water to flow through bag. Rinse with running water and hang to dry.

Leg bags and night drainage bags should be discarded after seven days of use.

## Follow-up

Your doctor will advise when to make your follow up appointment.

## When to contact your surgeon

Please contact your surgeon if your child if:

- The catheter comes out before it is due to be removed
- You notice a change in the urine e.g. cloudy, has an offensive smell or contains blood
- The catheter stops draining and you are unable to flush it (only do this if you have been shown how to by nursing staff)
- Persistent leaking around catheter insertion site
- Your child has a persistent temperature greater than 38.5°C
- Increased pain or discomfort
- Signs of infection around catheter site, such as discharge/pus, redness or swelling (especially around SPC site)

## Additional supplies

Additional supplies for catheterisation and catheter care can be purchased from:

### Independence Australia

Building 46, 9 Ashley St, West Footscray 3012

1300 788 855

Continence Nurse Advisor: 03 9494 4020

Cabrini Malvern Paediatric Ward  
183 Wattleree Road, Malvern VIC 3144  
03 9508 1378

Cabrini Brighton Paediatric Ward  
243 New Street, Brighton VIC 3186  
03 9508 5888



## PAEDIATRIC DISCHARGE INFORMATION

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### Royal Children's Hospital

Equipment Distribution Centre  
03 9345 5325

Please ask nursing staff for additional location details for equipment supplies if required.

### A note before you leave the hospital

Please report to the reception desk in the foyer of the hospital before leaving to finalise any administrative paperwork.

### Questions

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact your discharge ward on the number below.

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