

Plain English: Having a catheter fitted in hospital

Your kidneys produce urine which is stored in your bladder. You go to the toilet when your bladder feels full. You will be given a catheter and bag if:

- You have had trouble passing urine for a period of time, or are retaining urine
- The nursing staff need to monitor how much urine you are passing due to you having had an operation, illness or injury

Fitting your catheter:

The catheter tube goes into the hole that you urinate out of. The tube helps release the urine. You will be offered numbing gel or medication if needed to help insert the catheter into your bladder. The catheter will feel strange when it is first put in; this is quite normal.

The catheter may stay in position for a short or long time depending on:

- The type of catheter used
- The reason for its use

Keeping your catheter in place:

Inside the catheter are two very small tubes. One is for your urine to drip down into the bag. The nurse uses the other tube to inflate a small balloon with water. This balloon holds the catheter in place.

The nursing staff that fit your catheter will use a fixation device. In the hospital there are two different types:

- G-straps
- Statlocks

Fixation devices are used to stop your catheter from being pulled out or to prevent you becoming sore from it rubbing. The G-strap or Statlock fixes the catheter tube to your leg.



How long will I need a catheter?

Catheters are either for short-term need or long-term need. A short-term catheter is meant to stay in for a maximum of 28 days. It is important to talk to the nursing staff when you can try to urinate without the catheter. The catheter should be taken out as soon as possible (before 28 days). You can have a trial without a catheter. This means the nursing staff will monitor how you cope to urinate without the tube in place.

Long-term catheters need to be changed every 12 weeks. A patient may struggle to urinate after a short-term catheter is removed. Do not worry if you need to have another catheter. You may need to be reviewed by the Urology Team.

Please talk to your nurse if:

- You have any questions about the fixation device
- You are unsure how to move around with your catheter if you are mobile on the ward
- Feel pain from the catheter or a great amount of discomfort
- Are unsure when you can try to urinate without the catheter in place

Being discharged with a catheter:

If you are discharged from hospital with a catheter the nursing staff will tell you and a chosen person (family, carer, support) how to look after it. You will be given a bag with supplies and a booklet.

Important things to know:

- You will still need to use the toilet or bedpan to defecate (poo)
- You will be told by the nursing staff how much you can drink each day
- You need to tell the staff if you have an allergy to latex
- Urine can leak whilst your bladder gets used to the catheter
- You may see spots of blood in your urine bag. This can look worse than it is but talk to the nursing staff if you are worried or concerned

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