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## What is a Catheter?

A catheter is a small tube that goes through the opening of your penis into your bladder. It is held in place by an inflated balloon.

The catheter's purpose is to drain urine out. In order for the catheter to drain, the drainage bag needs to be lower than the level of the bladder. The catheter

## What does it feel like?

At first you may feel like you have to urinate. You may also have a burning feeling around your penis.

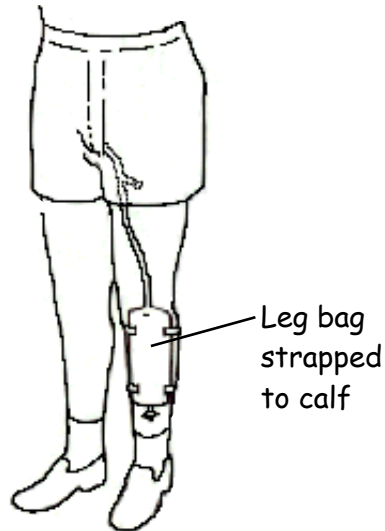
Sometimes you may feel a sudden pain and have the need to urinate. You may also see urine come out around the catheter. This is caused by bladder spasms and you cannot control these. Make sure the catheter is not blocked and is taped properly. If the spasms continue, contact your doctor.

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## Drainage Bags

For the first little while after your surgery, you are going to have a night bag which must be worn at nighttime, but it can also be worn during the day. It connects onto the catheter. It should be hung well below the level of your bladder.

Once at home, recovering from the surgery, most people prefer to wear a leg bag that they can move around easily with. It fits around your leg with straps. Your nurse will show you how to put it on and empty it. A piece of extension tubing will be connected to the catheter to allow urine to drain properly. You only use



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## More About Leg Bags

When at home with your leg bag, you should try to wear clothes that are loose at the bottom.

"Tear-away" pants with domes up the sides are the best option because they allow easy access to the leg bag.

## Catheter Comfort

When the catheter is in, it is easiest if you have the penis pulled back slightly and tape the catheter on your lower abdomen with a piece of paper tape. This helps to reduce soreness from the catheter pulling at the end of the penis.

## Catheter Care

The leg bag and the night bag can be cared for each day. Rise them out with soapy water and just a little bit of vinegar. Vinegar is always a good solution to kill the smell of urine. Let the leg bag drip dry at night when you are not using it. Do the same with the night bag in the morning. Each bag should last you for 2 weeks.

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## Personal Care

Take care when cleaning your penis and the catheter. Wash your hands with soap and water before you start.

- ◆ Men who are circumcised should wash the penis and around the catheter with soap and water using a circular motion. Rinse and pat dry with a clean towel.
- ◆ Men who are not circumcised should pull the foreskin back and wash the catheter with soap and water using a circular motion. Remove any crusted drainage or blood. Rinse and pat dry with a clean towel, then pull the foreskin forward.

## Blocked Drainage Bags

If for any reason the drainage bag is not at the right level, it will block. When this happens you will get urine leakage around the end of the catheter at the penis.

To help remove the blockage, get up and start moving around. This should resume the drainage. You need to drink a lot of fluids to make sure that the catheter is flushing regularly.

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# Catheter Care



For men,  
after radical  
prostate surgery

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