

Caring for Your Foley Catheter at Home (Male)

A Foley catheter is a flexible tube that is put through the urinary opening (urethra) and into your bladder. The device drains your urine into a drainage bag. A small balloon filled with sterile water is placed inside your bladder to hold the catheter in place.

Supplies

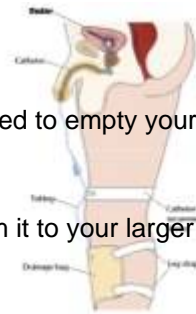
To care for your catheter, you need:

- Soap and water
- Washcloth and towel
- Catheter securement device to keep your Foley from pulling or tugging

Cleaning the Catheter

Twice every day—in the morning and in the evening—wash the area where the catheter enters your urethra. Follow these steps:

1. Gather your supplies.
2. Wash your hands with soap and water.
3. Look carefully at the place where the catheter enters your urethra. Check for any **swelling, redness or drainage (such as white or yellow pus or blood)**.
4. Gently wash the area around the catheter with soap and water. Be sure to wash the catheter as well as your penis and scrotum. Be careful not to pull on the catheter tubing.
5. If you're not circumcised, gently pull your foreskin up and wash all exposed skin surfaces. Return your foreskin over the tip of your penis. If your foreskin is not returned, circulation can be affected, which can lead to tissue damage. **If your foreskin is stuck and cannot be returned, this is a medical emergency. Go to a nearby emergency room.**
6. After washing, rinse well to remove all the soap, and pat the entire area dry to prevent skin breakdown.
7. Secure the catheter to your leg with the catheter securement device. Don't let the catheter tug or pull from your penis, as that can cause irritation and pain at the tip of your penis.
8. Attach the drainage bag to your leg using a leg strap. **Switch legs daily**, attaching the drainage bag to your left leg one day and your right leg the next. That helps prevent irritation to your urethra.
9. Wash your hands with soap and water.



Emptying the Drainage Bag

Empty a drainage bag when it's **just over half-full**. Remember, you'll need to empty your smaller leg bag more often than your larger nighttime drainage bag.

You should also empty your leg drainage bag whenever you change from it to your larger nighttime drainage bag.

To empty a drainage bag, follow these steps:

10. Wash your hands with soap and water.
11. Use a container that displays measurement markings if you're supposed to keep track of how much urine you put out.
12. Remove the drain tube from the cover/holder on the bottom of the bag.
13. Hold the bag drain over the container. Open the clamp on the drain tube so urine empties into the container.
14. When the bag is empty, **close the clamp** on the drain tube. Use a clean paper towel or tissue to dry the end of the drain tube. Then place the tube back into the cover/holder.
15. Take note of the urine's color, smell and amount. Urine should be clear and have a light yellow color with a mild smell. If you're supposed to keep track of your urine output, write down the amount, along with the current date and time.
16. Pour the urine into the toilet; flush; rinse the container with water; and then pour the water into the toilet. Set the container in a clean area until you need it again.
17. Wash your hands with soap and water.

Caring for the Drainage Bag

Clean your drainage bag **once every two days** with a mixture of vinegar and water. Follow these steps:

18. Mix 1 ½ cups of **vinegar** with 2 quarts of **water**.
19. Pour the vinegar-water mixture into the drainage bag through the drain tube and swish it around in the bag. Set the bag in a bathtub or sink to allow the mixture to soak for **30 minutes**. Be sure the **tubing** (not just the bag) is also full of the vinegar-water mixture.

20. Drain the mixture out and rinse the drainage bag with **clean water**. Dry the outside of the bag and tubing. Do **not** use a bleach solution during this process, as it can damage the bag and tubing.

Use a new drainage bag **every month**—or sooner if there is a **leak**. Throw old drainage bags and tubing into the garbage.

When to Call Your Primary Health Care Provider

Call your primary health care provider if any of the following occurs:

- Signs or symptoms of a **urinary tract infection**:
 - ☐ Fever
 - ☐ Chills
 - ☐ Frequent, urgent and/or painful urination
 - ☐ Abdominal cramping
 - ☐ Increased leakage
 - ☐ Increased odor
 - ☐ Increased incontinence (inability to control the release of urine)
- Signs your catheter might be **plugged**:
 - ☐ Feeling of bladder fullness
 - ☐ Putting out an unusually small amount of urine
 - ☐ No drainage of urine since you last emptied your drainage bag
 - ☐ Urine leaking around the tube
- Blood in your urine
- Catheter falls out
- More urine leaking or bloody drainage after surgery than you were told to expect

Before you call:

Gather all your information so you have it ready when you make the phone call. Write the information down to help you remember. For example, describe:

- Your temperature
- If you have chills

- If there is any blood in your urine
- If you are urinating more frequently, or if you feel urgency or pain with urination
- If you have any abdominal cramping
- Any change in odor of your urine
- Any increased incontinence (inability to control the release of your urine)

During the call:

Carefully describe your problem with as much detail as you can.

[Make An Appointment](#) [651-290-8707](#)

This information is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care providers. If you have any questions, talk with your doctor or others on your health care team.

If you are a Gillette patient with urgent questions or concerns, please contact Telehealth Nursing at [651-229-3890](#).