



Bladder and Bowel UK

formerly PromoCon

part of Disabled Living

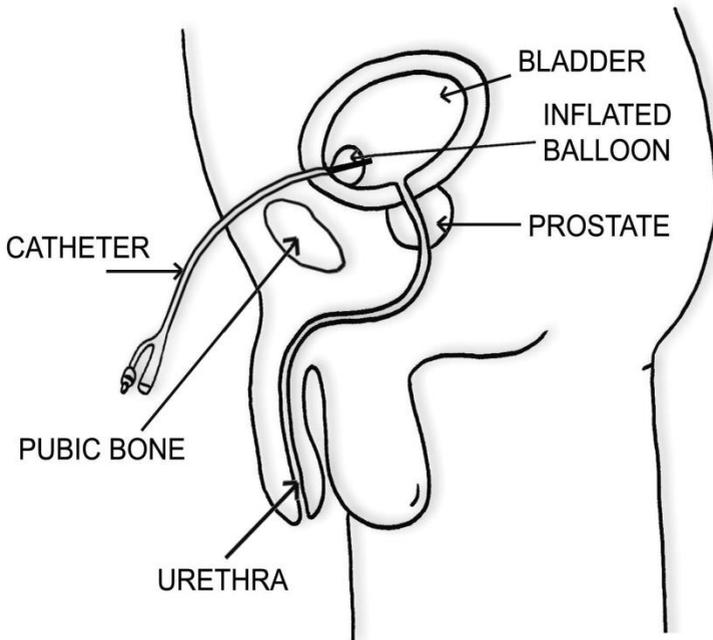
Discussions about having a Supra pubic catheter



What is a supra pubic catheter?

A supra pubic catheter is used to drain urine from the bladder by inserting a catheter (narrow hollow drainage tube) directly into your bladder through a small opening that has been made in your abdomen, usually a few inches below your belly button. The catheter is held in place by an inflatable balloon at its tip. The procedure is usually carried out in hospital under a general or local anaesthetic.

Suprapubic catheter



Why do people have a supra pubic catheter?

For people who cannot empty their bladder completely then a catheter will be needed. For some people this will be inserted into the bladder via their urethra but for others, a supra pubic catheter may prove a better option for a number of reasons because of:

- Difficulty and discomfort, particularly if wheelchair bound
- Long term catheterisation damaging the urethra
- Interference with sexual activity
- Ease of management and maintenance of hygiene
- Less likelihood to kink or be pulled out accidentally
- Reduced risk of urine infection

Will I need a bag to drain the urine?

Depending on the underlying bladder problem, the catheter may be attached to a bag into which the urine drains continuously (sometimes called 'free drainage') or the bag is replaced by a catheter valve.

When a catheter valve is used, the urine is stored in the bladder as normal and then emptied via the catheter into the toilet or a receptacle on a regular basis (eg every 3 hours) by releasing and opening the valve.

Your healthcare professional will advise which is the best method for you.

Whatever method is chosen, you may also need a night drainage bag to use in bed. This has a larger capacity than the day bag to hold all the urine produced overnight. Your healthcare professional will also help you choose which bags are best for you.

How often will the catheter need changing?

The first catheter change is usually done after 6-8 weeks either in the hospital or at home by a Community Nurse. However, changing the catheter is a procedure that you or a member of your family may be taught to do.

How do I look after the catheter?

The commonest problem with a urinary catheter is a urinary tract infection (UTI). To reduce this risk you need to:

- Always wash your hands before and after handling the catheter and bag or valve.
- Do not let the bag get completely full of urine and remember to release the catheter valve regularly if used.
- Keep the area around the catheter entry point clean and dry and avoid the use of scented creams or talc.
- Drink at least 1.5 - 2 litres of water based drinks per day and avoid drinking too much tea, coffee or fizzy drinks as they can irritate the bladder.
- Use a thigh or abdominal strap to secure the catheter to prevent it being pulled and alternate the position of the drainage bag each day to right and left to reduce any soreness around the catheter site.
- Avoid constipation by eating high fibre foods including brown bread and plenty of fruit and vegetables (at least 5 portions).

Will I still be able to have sex?

Yes there is no reason why not – just ensure you empty the drainage bag first and tape the catheter down out of the way so it does not get accidentally pulled.

Can I go swimming?

Yes, swimming is usually not a problem, but you will need to check with your doctor or nurse when it is ok for you to start going – this is usually after the site has healed.

When you go swimming, it is important to check that the catheter is securely positioned. Also you will need to ensure that the skin around your catheter is healed, clean and dry. The swimming pool water should be treated and clean. The drainage bag can be disconnected and a cone shaped spigot or catheter valve put in the end of the catheter to prevent any leakage. After swimming make sure the catheter site is clean and dry. Good hygiene practice is essential to prevent infection. For individuals who go swimming often, then a catheter valve may be a better long term option rather than continually taking the bag off – discuss this with your health care professional.

If it is not possible to remove the drainage bag, then it should be emptied before you enter the pool. There are a number of swimwear manufacturers that produce swimwear that are designed to discreetly disguise the use of appliances – contact PromoCon for further information.

What happens if I have a problem with the catheter?

Catheter falls out

If the catheter falls out, it does need to be replaced as soon as possible (within an hour depending on how long you have had the catheter) otherwise the hole to your bladder may close. If the hole does close, you may have to return to hospital to have the catheter replaced. Always have a spare catheter available in case of emergency.

Catheter becomes blocked

If the catheter becomes blocked, so no urine drains out, within a few weeks of it being newly inserted then it is important not to remove the catheter as the tract may not have properly formed and the hole will close very quickly.

Contact your nurse or doctor immediately.

Further sources of information

Urinary catheterisation – NHS Choices

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Urinary-catheterisation/Pages/How-is-it-performed.aspx>



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Further information Bladder and Bowel UK

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Bladder and Bowel UK, working as part of the charity Disabled Living, provides impartial advice and information regarding bladder & bowel problems, products and services.

Other booklets in this series:

Discussions about constipation

Discussions about having a Mitrofanoff

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