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You have a catheter

When a catheter is inserted into your bladder it is there to help you pass urine. One of the main reasons you have required a urinary catheter is because you have not been able to pass urine. This is called urinary retention.

Whether your catheter was inserted in the Emergency Department, Assessment Unit, a ward or from your community area, you should be seen by a urology nurse in order to assess your bladder function.

To do this you will be invited for a trial without your catheter clinic (TWOC) which is located in the Urology Department on the first floor next to Buckland Ward at East Surrey Hospital.

At this appointment the nurse will remove your catheter and assess your ability to pass urine on your own. If this is not possible the nurse will discuss with you the options of what to do next.

You will be contacted either by post or telephone to confirm an appointment date. You are usually seen 2 weeks after your catheter has been inserted.

Before you are invited for a TWOC, there are a few things that you ought to know in order to look after your catheter whilst you are at home.

Hygiene

It is important to keep clean the tube which is outside your body. This can be done very easily by cleaning the tube with warm water and running a clean cloth up and down the tube. No soap is required and be careful not to tug at the catheter.

Your own personal hygiene is also important:

- If you are a man and have your foreskin, you should retract the foreskin backwards to clean under at least once daily. If you find your foreskin tight and are unable to do this you should notify your doctor.
- If you are a woman, you should clean your genital area twice daily as you are more likely to obtain urine infections. Plain warm water is sufficient.

Fluid intake

When you have a catheter you should increase your fluid intake. This helps keep the catheter patent and stops “debris” forming at the ‘eyes’ of the catheter which can then block the flow. You are encouraged to drink water, juices or squashes. For some people this can be difficult as they are not used to drinking a lot throughout the day.

A normal daily intake of fluid is around: 1500 mls – 2 litres per day or about 6 – 8 glasses, depending on your size of glass. (Remember that some of your daily fluid intake is taken from food).

Supplies

When you have a catheter it is important to have all the relevant supplies (leg bag / Tap or sometimes called a valve - and a night bag). The medical staff who inserted your catheter should provide you with limited supplies. They will teach you how to empty the catheter, The catheter bag/valve should be changed weekly.

Supplies can also be obtained by your GP on prescription. If for some reason you have not been given any supplies please contact your GP as soon as possible. Some District Nurses can also prescribe these supplies.

Certain companies who make the products have a home delivery service. The medical staff can register you with the relevant company, such as Charter Healthcare, before you leave the department. If this is the case the nurse should inform you of this.

District Nurse

If you have a catheter it is important that you are referred to your local District Nurse before discharge. If you have not been referred, please ring your GP and ask him/her to put you in touch with your local District Nurse.

District nurses are able to assess and monitor the care of the catheter if you should encounter any problems. They can offer valuable advice and hands on care, thus avoiding unnecessary trips to hospital. **They should be your first port of call before seeking more acute help or services.**

Tamsulosin

For gentlemen Tamsulosin should be taken at least 4 days before your TWOC and as it can help when passing urine once the catheter has been removed.

If you are a man and have not already been started on this medication, please arrange for your GP to prescribe it for you.

I hope this leaflet is of some use to you and that it has answered your questions or addressed your concerns.

For further information please telephone 01737 768511 Ext 6548 and leave a message on the answer phone. A member of the Urology Nursing Team will contact you as soon as possible. Sister 01737 768511 ext 6896

For all other queries or concerns about the trust contact the Patient Advice Liaison Service (PALS) on 6922/6831

This information can be made available in other languages and formats.
Telephone 01737768511 ext 6831

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