WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR FOLEY CATHETER

A Foley catheter is a sterile tube that is inserted through your urethra and into your bladder to drain urine. The catheter has a small balloon filled with water that holds the catheter inside your bladder.

Always wash your hands with soap and water. Do this before and after you touch your catheter, tubing, or drainage bag. Dry with a clean towel.

Secure the catheter tube high on the thigh with medical tape or a strap so the catheter does not get pulled at the urethra when you move. This helps prevent bladder spasms (painful cramping). Bladder spasms can cause leakage around the catheter. Occasional bladder spasms are normal. Call our office if it is occurring frequently. There are medications that can help with bladder spasms.

**Showering** – You can remove the bag and just let the catheter hang down or you can hold the bag up (removing the straps so they don't get wet). Your catheter and the area around it need to be cleaned every day with soap and water.

If you develop an inflammation around the tip of the penis, apply a thin coat of Neosporin.

Empty the drainage bag when needed. The weight of a full drainage bag can pull on and hurt your urethra. Empty the drainage bag when it is ¼ to 2/3 full. Most likely you will have two bags. The down drain (the largest bag) is for bedtime so you don’t have to get up as often at night to empty the bag. Always use a clean alcohol pad to clean the ends of the catheter and the bag before connecting.

Clean and change the drainage bag approximately once a month. (1) Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water. Disconnect catheter bag from tubing, and connect tubing to back-up bag. Drain catheter bag completely. (2) Rinse the old bag with warm water and empty it. (3) Mix a vinegar solution: three parts water to one part white vinegar. Using two cups of vinegar and six cups of water should provide ample solution. Pour solution into bag and let sit for 20 minutes and then empty and rinse the bag. Make sure you rinse the bag out thoroughly for at least 5 minutes to ensure that all the mixture is out of the bag before drying. (4) Allow to dry fully. You can either hand dry the bag with a paper towel or hang it outside to dry for about four hours. (5) Once the bag has been dried completely, you can then place it in a plastic bag and seal it. The bag is then ready to use again.
Problems that can occur with a Foley catheter and what to do about them:

No urine or decreased urine draining into the bag:

- Check for kinks in the tubing and straighten them out.
- Check tape or strap used to secure the catheter tube. Make sure it isn’t blocking the tube.
- Make sure you are not sitting or lying on the tubing.
- Make sure the urine bag is hanging or secured below the level of your bladder.
- Push catheter in about ¼ inch and see if it starts draining. If it still isn’t draining, contact our office to come in to have the catheter flushed.

You see blood in the tubing or the drainage bag:

- Seeing some blood can be normal. It might be from irritation, activity, or low fluid intake. As long as the urine is draining, you should be fine.
- Drink lots of water. Keep well hydrated.
- If catheter stops draining the catheter might be plugged. Call office to notify us of the problem and set up a time to come in to have the catheter flushed.

Other catheter reasons to call our office:

- Your catheter becomes blocked or falls out.
- You have a fever.
- If your urine is red and thick like tomato soup.
- If your urine is pink, cranberry colored, drink more fluids to flush it out - call if it doesn’t clear.