

FAQs

Urinary Catheters and Prevention of Urinary Tract Infections

What is a urinary catheter and will I have one?

A urinary catheter is a small tube placed in the bladder that allows urine to drain through the tube and into a collection bag. It is used with some surgeries. Not all patients require a catheter; your doctor will determine the need for you to have a catheter.

What is a catheter associated urinary tract infection?

Germs can enter the urinary tract when the catheter is being put in or while the catheter remains in the bladder.

What are the symptoms of a urinary tract infection? Some common symptoms include:

- Burning or pain in the very lower part of the abdomen.
- Fever.
- Bloody urine can be a sign of infection, but may also be related to the surgical procedure (check with your nurse or doctor).
- After the catheter has been removed - burning with urination or having to urinate frequently, often small amounts.

What can be done to prevent an infection if I do have a catheter?

- Hospital staff should all clean their hands before and after touching your catheter.
- Clean your hands before touching your catheter tubing.
- The catheter should be secured to your leg with tape to prevent tugging on the catheter.
- Avoid letting the tubing twist or kink and keep the bag below the level of your bladder.
- Bathe and perform personal hygiene daily using soap and water (cleaning around the catheter with an antiseptic is not recommended and can be harsh and irritating).

If you have further questions please ask your doctor or nurse.

