

## **What is a Catheter-Associated Urinary Tract Infection?**

### **What is a urinary tract infection?**

A urinary tract infection is an infection in your urinary system. The parts of the body that make up the urinary system are:

- The kidneys – filter urine
- The ureters – long, thin tubes that carry urine from the kidneys to the bladder
- The urinary bladder – stores the urine
- The urethra – tube that connects the bladder to the outside of the body

A urinary tract infection is also referred to as a “UTI.” It is caused by bacteria, or germs, that do not normally live in the urinary system.

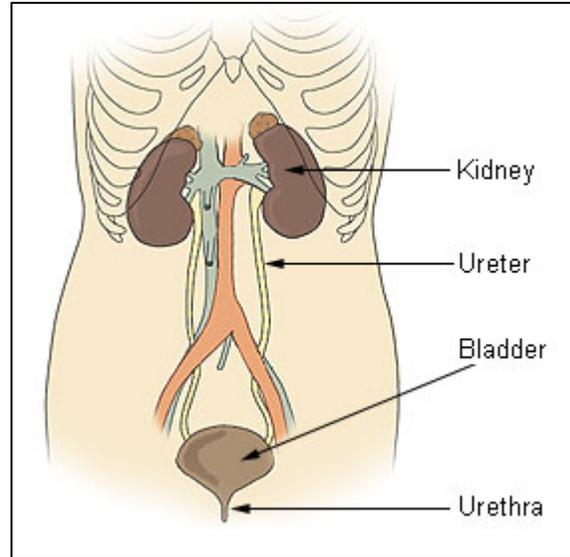
### **What is a catheter-associated UTI and how does it happen?**

Some patients may need urinary catheters to assist in draining urine from the bladder. Some reasons why a catheter may be used include:

- Inability to urinate on your own
- Need to have precise measurements of urine, for example during surgeries or when in intensive care
- Need during some tests of the kidneys or bladder.

Patients with urinary catheters have a higher chance of getting UTI’s. This is because germs can travel along the tubing of the catheter and cause infection in the urinary system. This is then referred to as a “catheter-associated” UTI.

Many of the germs that cause catheter-associated UTI’s are commonly found in the intestines. They do not cause infections in the intestines, but they can cause them if they enter the urinary system.



### **What are the symptoms of a UTI?**

- Frequent urge or feeling to urinate
- Pain or burning on urination, or difficulty urinating, once the catheter is removed.
- Fever
- A feeling of pressure, pain or fullness in the pelvic area or lower abdominal area
- Cloudy or foul smelling urine
- Blood in the urine
- If the kidneys are involved, there may also be pain in the lower back area
- Elderly may have unusual symptoms, such as confusion, weakness, or falls

Sometimes people do not have any symptoms at all.

## **How are catheter-associated UTI's treated?**

Catheter-associated infections are usually treated by removal or change of the catheter and antibiotics. Your physician will usually order a urine culture and then determine what antibiotic is best for you based on the culture results.

## **What is the staff at Danbury Hospital doing to prevent catheter-associated UTI's?**

To prevent urinary tract infections, the physicians and nurses at Danbury Hospital do the following:

- ✓ Catheters are put in only when necessary and they are taken out as soon as possible.
- ✓ Only trained staff insert catheters, and they use sterile techniques to do this.
- ✓ Staff thoroughly wash their hands by using either soap and water or alcohol-based gel prior to touching catheters.
- ✓ Catheter drainage bags are kept below the level of the bladder to prevent urine backflowing into the bladder.
- ✓ Drainage bags are emptied each shift to measure the urine amount and to prevent urine from sitting in the drainage bag for long periods of time.

## **What can I do as the patient to help prevent catheter-associated UTI's?**

- Always wash your hands before and after touching the catheter.
- Always keep your drainage bag below the level of your bladder.
- Do not tug or pull on the catheter or tubing – this causes inflammation and an environment for bacteria to grow

- Do not twist, kink, or lie on the tubing. This will prevent the urine from draining from your bladder.
- Ask your physician and nurse every day if you still need the catheter.

***If you do not see your physician, nurse, or any other healthcare provider wash his/her hands, please ask them to do so.***

## **Are there any special care instructions for when I go home?**

If you go home with your catheter still in, your physician and/or nurse will explain everything you need to know about taking care of your catheter. If you are unsure how to take care of your catheter after this teaching, let your physician or nurse know that you are still unsure what to do at home.

Report any symptoms of urinary tract infection to your physician, as described on the front of this fact sheet.

Source:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
The Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America

05/2010

*For more information, or to learn about the specialized services and programs available at Danbury Hospital, please visit [www.DanburyHospital.org](http://www.DanburyHospital.org)*