

Care of a Nephrostomy Catheter

What is a nephrostomy catheter?

A nephrostomy catheter is a flexible tube that is placed in the kidney to drain urine that is trapped due to a blockage in the ureters. The kidney makes urine, which drains through the ureters and into the urinary bladder. When the ureter is blocked, the urine backs up into the kidney causing damage. The nephrostomy catheter is about the same size as an intravenous (IV) tube. The catheter will be connected to a drainage bag and your urine will drain out of your body into the bag.

A complication that can occur with a nephrostomy catheter is infection of the skin around the catheter site or the kidney. It is important to keep the area clean and the dressing intact. Visiting nurse services may be provided to assist with the care of your nephrostomy catheter.

How do I care for the skin around the catheter?

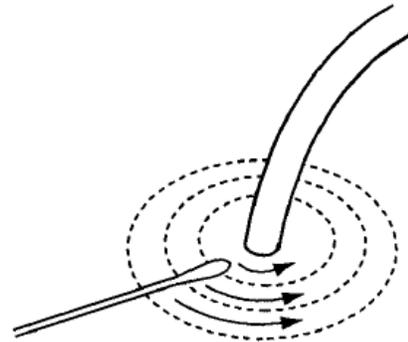
Keep the catheter site dry. You may shower 48 hours after placement of the nephrostomy catheter. Cover the skin around the site and the catheter with plastic wrap so that water cannot get under it when showering. You should not take a tub bath or go swimming.

Keep the skin around your catheter clean and covered with either a 4x4 gauze or transparent dressing. A gauze dressing should be changed daily. A transparent dressing may be changed every 72 hours. Either dressing should be changed if it becomes wet or the edge comes loose.

How do I change the dressing around my nephrostomy catheter?

1. Gather supplies:
 - 2 pairs of non-sterile gloves.
 - 4x4 gauze or transparent dressing.

- Hydrogen peroxide
 - Paper tape if gauze used
 - Cotton swabs
 - Plastic garbage bag
2. Wash hands and put on gloves.
 3. Remove old dressings carefully to prevent dislodging tubing and discard in garbage bag.
 4. Note any signs of infection, which would include fever, pain, redness, drainage, odor. Report signs of infection to your physician.
 5. Remove gloves, wash hands, put on new pair of gloves.
 6. Clean the skin around the catheter with a clean cotton swab and hydrogen peroxide. Swab in a circular motion from the area closest to the catheter out to a 3 inch border around the catheter site. Let air dry.



7. Apply sterile 4x4 gauze or transparent dressing. Avoid touching the dressing where it will be placed over the catheter. Apply paper tape completely over gauze pad.
8. Discard cotton swabs in garbage.
9. Remove gloves, discard, and wash hands.

Flushing the Nephrostomy Catheter

Your nephrostomy catheter may need to be flushed the first few days after it is inserted. Do not irrigate your nephrostomy catheter without first speaking with your physician.

Important Note:

- Sterile normal saline is used to flush the catheter to prevent infection.
- Only 5 to 10 ml's of normal saline is to be used to flush the catheter to prevent distending the kidney and causing damage.
- Never use the syringe to withdraw fluid from the kidney. This can also cause damage.
- If you feel any pressure when flushing the catheter, stop the procedure and call your physician.

Procedure

1. Gather supplies:
 - 10 ml syringe with a needle to draw up normal saline
 - Alcohol pads or cotton balls soaked with rubbing alcohol
 - Non-sterile gloves
 - Vial of sterile normal saline
2. Wash hands and put on gloves.
3. Clean the top of the vial with an alcohol pad/cotton ball and clean the injection cap on the stopcock of the nephrostomy catheter with another alcohol pad/cotton ball.
4. Draw up 5 to 10 ml's of normal saline into the syringe.
5. Carefully put the needle of the syringe into the injection cap of the stopcock.
6. Turn the stopcock to "off" or "closed" to the drainage bag.

7. **Gently** push the syringe plunger to flush the catheter with the saline. Never force the saline or pull back on the syringe to withdraw the saline.
8. Turn the stopcock to "off" or "closed" to the cap to allow the urine to drain into the bag.
9. Remove the syringe from the injection cap on the stopcock.
10. Throw the syringe and needle into a plastic or metal puncture-resistant container with a lid, such as a milk bottle or coffee can.
11. Remove gloves and wash hands.

Note: If your nephrostomy catheter is capped with an injection cap and is not attached to a drainage bag:

1. Follow steps 1 through 4 above.
2. Clean the injection cap with an alcohol swab/cotton ball.
3. Insert the needle of the 5 to 10 ml syringe of sterile normal saline into the injection cap.
4. **Gently** push the syringe plunger to flush the catheter. Never force the saline or pull back on the syringe to withdraw the saline.
5. Remove the syringe from the injection cap.
6. Throw the syringe and needle into a plastic or metal puncture-resistant container with a lid, such as a milk bottle or coffee can.
7. Remove gloves and wash hands.

Source:

Ohio State University Medical Center @ medicalcenter.osu.edu
Society of Interventional Radiology @ www.sirweb.org

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