

Care of a Suprapubic Cystostomy

What is a suprapubic cystostomy?

A suprapubic cystostomy is a surgical opening made above the pubic bone into the urinary bladder. A urinary catheter or tube is inserted into the bladder and is held in place by a balloon and/or sutures (stitches).

How do I care for the suprapubic cystostomy?

It is very important to keep the area around the cystostomy clean. Wash your hands before and after any care to the catheter, dressing, and drainage bag to prevent infection. Avoid kinking or lying on the catheter. This obstructs urine from flowing freely out of the bladder.

The dressing should be changed daily, or more often if it becomes soiled or falls off:

1. Wash hands
2. Remove the old dressing
3. Clean the skin around the catheter with a mixture of 2 tablespoons hydrogen peroxide and 2 tablespoons water.
4. Apply two 4x4 dressings over the insertion site and secure with adhesive tape or transparent dressing. Your physician or nurse may also recommend using sponge drain gauze as a dressing.
5. For the suprapubic catheter, gently curve the catheter and tape it to the skin to prevent the catheter from moving back and forth and irritating the bladder.



What type of collection bag should I use?

There are two types of urinary collection bags, a drainage bag and a leg bag. The drainage bag is used when you are sleeping or lying down. It holds a greater volume of urine and is generally used at night while sleeping. The leg bag is used when you are up and active. This holds less urine, but allows you to move around more easily during the day.

Drainage Bag



Leg Bag



How do I change the bags?

Changing from a drainage bag to a leg bag:

1. Wash hands.
2. Attach the lower strap of the leg bag to your leg. The strap should fit snugly enough to prevent the bag from sliding down your leg, but not so tight as to constrict the blood flow to your leg or cut into the skin.
3. Clean the connection between the catheter and the drainage bag with an alcohol swab, or a gauze pad with rubbing alcohol on it. Also clean the connection port of the leg bag.
4. Gently tap the connection to drain any urine left in the tube down into the bag.
5. Hold the catheter or tube with one hand. Grasp the tubing with the opposite hand and work the connection loose by using your thumb to push up on the end of the catheter.
6. Pinch the catheter closed and pull the drainage bag tubing out. Insert the leg bag tubing into the catheter.

7. Attach the upper strap of the leg bag to your leg.
8. Ensure that the catheter has enough slack so that it does not pull when you move your leg.
9. Empty the drainage bag—your physician may ask you to measure and record the amount of urine in the bag. Rinse the bag with cool water. Store the bag in a clean area.
10. Wash hands.

Changing from a leg bag to a drainage bag:

1. Wash hands.
2. Remove the top strap from your leg.
3. Clean the connection between the catheter and the leg bag tubing with an alcohol swab or gauze with rubbing alcohol on it. Also clean the tubing connection port of the drainage bag.
4. Gently tap the connection to drain any urine left in the tube down into the leg bag.
5. Hold the catheter or tube with one hand. Grasp the tubing with the opposite hand. Work the connection loose by using your thumb to push up on the end of the catheter.
6. Pinch the catheter closed and pull the leg bag tubing out. Insert the drainage bag tubing into the catheter.
7. Take the other strap of the leg bag off your leg.
8. Empty the leg bag—your physician may ask you to measure and record the amount of urine in the bag. Rinse the leg bag.
9. Wash hands.

Special Instructions

Never go to bed with the leg bag on. Urine could flow back into the bladder if the leg bag fills up. Even when taking a nap, it is suggested that you switch over to the larger drainage bag to allow urine to flow more freely.

Be careful not to lie on or kink the tubing because this will obstruct the flow of urine from the bladder.

Empty your bags at least every 8 hours, or more often if needed.

At least once a week, rinse the inside of the drainage bags and tubing with ½ cup vinegar and 1½ cups water. After cleaning the drainage bags, hang the bag in the shower or bathtub to dry between use.

Discard drainage bags if damaged or if you can no longer remove the odors with cleaning.

When should I call the physician?

Notify your physician if you have one or more of the following:

- Severe or increasing flank pain, especially if nausea or vomiting are noted.
- Large amount of blood in urine.
- Decreased urine output.
- Excessive drainage around the catheter.
- Foul smelling drainage around the catheter.
- No urine draining from the catheter.
- Catheter comes out of the insertion site.
- Temperature over 101°F, chills.
- Redness, swelling or tenderness where the catheter enters your skin.

Source: Lynn, P. (Ed.). (2002). Taylor's Clinical Nursing Skills: A Nursing Process Approach. Lippincott Williams &Wilkins. 12/2007