



SUBRAPUBIC CATHETER CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Why do I have a suprapubic tube?

A suprapubic tube (SPT) is a catheter that is used temporarily (or permanently) to empty the bladder. Anyone who cannot empty their bladder may need a urinary catheter. A suprapubic urinary catheter may be chosen because it is more comfortable and less likely to give you an infection than other catheters. Other reasons may be:

- The urethra (the tube where urine comes out) has been traumatized/damaged.
- For people who require long-term catheterisation and are sexually active.
- After some gynecological operations e.g. surgery for prolapsed uterus (womb), bladder.
- Some wheelchair users find this method simpler to manage.
- People who cannot perform self-catheterisation.
- Long-term catheterisation for incontinence. Although this is not generally recommended, sometimes medical staff feel it appropriate to avoid skin problems or other medical complications.

How do I care for my SPT?

- **Always** wash your hands with soap and water before and after handling your catheter.
- Cleanse skin around catheter with soap and water **daily**.
- Make sure that the catheter tubing does not get twisted or kinked, and that urine is flowing out of the catheter into the urine collection bag.
- Keep the urine collection bag **below** the level of your bladder.
- Make sure that the urine collection bag does not drag and pull on the catheter.
- You can shower with your catheter and urine collection bag in place **unless** you have been told not to.
- Clean the bag **every day** after removing it from the catheter. To clean the bag, fill it with 2 parts vinegar to 3 parts water and let it stand for 20 minutes. Then empty it out and let it air-dry.
- Wipe connection between the bag and catheter with alcohol when attaching bag or plug.
- Use a **new** catheter plug each day or soak catheter plug overnight in alcohol.

How and when do I plug my SPT?

- Use overnight drainage bag at night while sleeping.
- Plug catheter upon awakening.
- Attempt to urinate every few hours while awake, but only unplug the catheter every 4 hours or if you feel your bladder is full.
- Always attempting to void prior to unplugging your catheter.

Activities:

Sex?

Yes. The suprapubic catheter should not get in the way of sexual activity.

Swimming?

Yes, you may go swimming as long as the skin around your catheter is healed, clean and dry and the swimming pool water is treated/clean. Afterwards ensure your catheter site is clean and dried thoroughly. Good hygiene is paramount to avoid infection. If you choose to go swimming there are smaller urine drainage bags or catheter valves available on the market to facilitate discretion when wearing a bathing costume. You are also entitled to use changing facilities provided for people with a disability. Speak to your healthcare professional for further advice.