

You have been told you will need a catheter. A urinary catheter is a thin tube put in your bladder to drain urine from your body. A catheter can be an important part of your care. It can also be a pathway for germs to get into your body and cause an infection. Learn what you can do to protect yourself from getting an infection.

If at any point you have questions, do not hesitate to ask your healthcare provider. Remember to follow any instructions they give you about caring for the catheter.

The collection of healthcare associated infections (HAI) data will provide greater awareness of HAIs, allow for earlier identification of trends, and promote adherence to strategies for prevention.

Alabama requires that acute healthcare facilities report catheter-associated urinary tract infections that occur in certain areas of the hospital. The information that hospitals report to the Alabama Department of Public Health will be compiled, analyzed, and published at:

www.alabamapublichealth.gov/hai

For more information, go to <http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/hai>

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What to expect: Urinary Catheter

Protecting Yourself
from Infection

Alabama Department of Public Health



What is a catheter?

A urinary catheter (or Foley) is a thin tube placed in the bladder through the urethra to drain urine. Urine will collect into a bag that is attached to the tube.

Why do I need it?

Your healthcare provider can tell you why you need a catheter. You may need a urinary catheter if you are unable to urinate on your own, are a surgery patient, have acute urinary retention or bladder obstruction, or other additional reasons.

What should I expect?

- The catheter will be inserted by a person specially trained in safe catheter insertion practices.
- The person inserting the catheter will have clean hands and wear gloves.
- The area of the body where the catheter will be inserted will be cleaned before the catheter is put in.
- If you have questions or concerns at any point during the process, speak to your healthcare provider.



To help prevent infection:

- Ask each day if you need the catheter.
- Do not touch, pull, tug, or bend the catheter or tube.
- Make sure to keep the drainage bag lower than your bladder. When not in bed, keeping the bag attached to your leg is a good way to keep it lower than your bladder.
- Keep the bag off the floor.
- Drink lots of water and fluids unless told otherwise by your healthcare provider.
- Wash your hands before touching the catheter or tubing.



Your healthcare provider should:

- Check each day to see if the catheter is still needed.
- Wash their hands before and after touching your catheter or use clean gloves.
- Check for the amount of urine in the drainage bag.
- Make sure no bends are in the catheter tube.
- Empty the drainage bag.
- Remove the catheter as soon as possible.



Tell your healthcare provider if you have:

- Burning or pain in the lower stomach
- Fever
- Bloody urine
- Burning at the insertion site

**These may be signs of an infection.*