



CATHETER-ASSOCIATED URINARY TRACT INFECTION

WHAT IS A CATHETER-ASSOCIATED URINARY TRACT INFECTION?

A urinary tract infection (also called UTI) is an infection in the urinary system, which includes the bladder (which stores the urine) and the kidneys (which filter the blood to make urine). Germs (for example, bacteria or yeasts) do not normally live in these areas but, if germs are introduced, an infection can occur.

If you have a urinary catheter, germs can travel along the catheter and cause an infection in your bladder or your kidney; in that case it is called a catheter-associated urinary tract infection (CAUTI).

WHAT IS A URINARY CATHETER?



Figure D

A urinary catheter is a thin tube placed in the bladder to drain urine. Urine drains through the tube into a bag that collects the urine.

A urinary catheter may be used:

- If you are not able to urinate on your own
- To measure the amount of urine that you make, for example, during intensive care
- During and after some types of surgery
- During some tests of the kidneys and bladder

People with urinary catheters have a higher risk of developing a urinary tract infection than people who don't have a catheter.

HOW DO I GET A CAUTI?

If germs enter the urinary tract, they may cause an infection. Many of the germs that cause a CAUTI are common germs found in your intestines that do not usually cause an infection there. Germs can enter the urinary tract when the catheter is being put in or while the catheter remains in the bladder.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A URINARY TRACT INFECTION?

Some common symptoms are:

- Burning or pain in the lower abdomen (that is, below the stomach)
- Fever
- Bloody urine may be a sign of infection, but is also caused by other problems
- Burning during urination or an increase in the frequency of urination after the catheter is removed

Sometimes people with CAUTIs do not have these symptoms of infection.

CAN A CAUTI BE TREATED?

Yes, most CAUTIs can be treated with antibiotics and removal or change of the catheter. Your doctor will determine which antibiotic is best for you.



WHAT ARE HOSPITALS DOING TO PREVENT A CAUTI?

To prevent a CAUTI, doctors and nurses take the following actions.

Catheter insertion:

- Catheters are put in only when necessary and removed as soon as possible.
- Only properly trained persons insert catheters using sterile (clean) technique.
- Skin in the area where the catheter will be inserted is cleaned before inserting the catheter.
- The catheter is secured to your leg to prevent pulling on the catheter.
- Other methods to drain the urine are sometimes used, such as:
 - External catheters in men (these look like condoms and are placed over the penis rather than into the penis)
 - Intermittent urethral catheterization (putting a temporary catheter in to drain the urine and removing it right away)

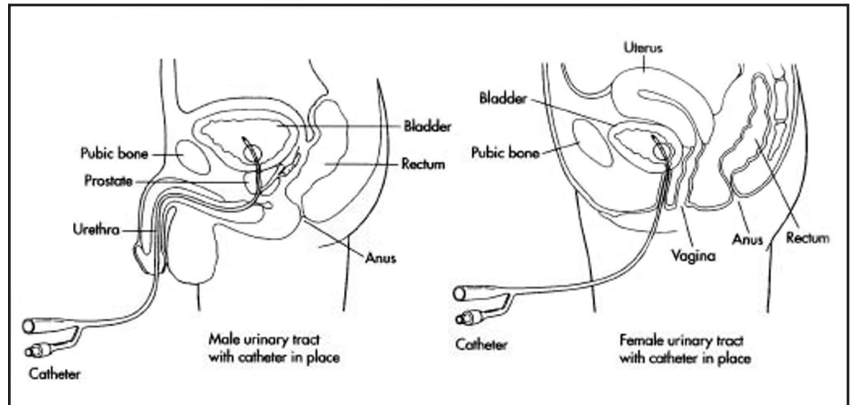
Catheter care:

- Health care providers clean their hands by washing with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand rub before and after touching your catheter.

If you do not see your providers clean their hands, ask them to do so.

HOW DO I HELP PREVENT CAUTI?

- Always clean your hands before and after doing catheter care.
- Do not tug or pull on the tubing.
- Do not twist or kink the catheter tubing.



- Avoid disconnecting the catheter and drain tube. This helps to prevent germs from getting into the catheter tube.
- Always keep the bag lower than your bladder to prevent urine from backflowing to your bladder.
- Empty the bag regularly. The drainage spout should not touch anything while emptying the bag.
- Ask your health care provider each day if you still need the catheter.

WHAT DO I DO WHEN I GO HOME?

- If you will be going home with a catheter, your doctor or nurse will explain everything you need to know about taking care of the catheter. Make sure you understand how to care for it before you leave the hospital.
- If you develop any of the symptoms of a UTI, such as burning or pain in the lower abdomen, fever, or an increase in the frequency of urination, contact your doctor or nurse immediately.
- Before you go home, make sure you know who to contact if you have a question or problems after you get home.

If you have questions, ask your doctor or nurse.

