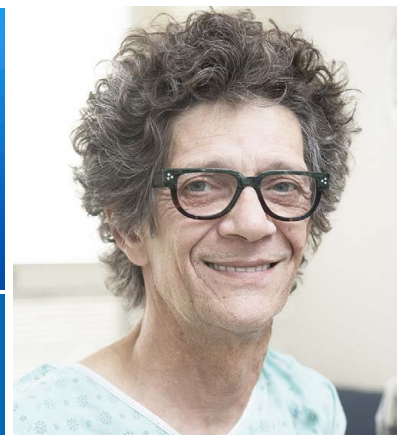


# Taking care of a catheter in the bladder

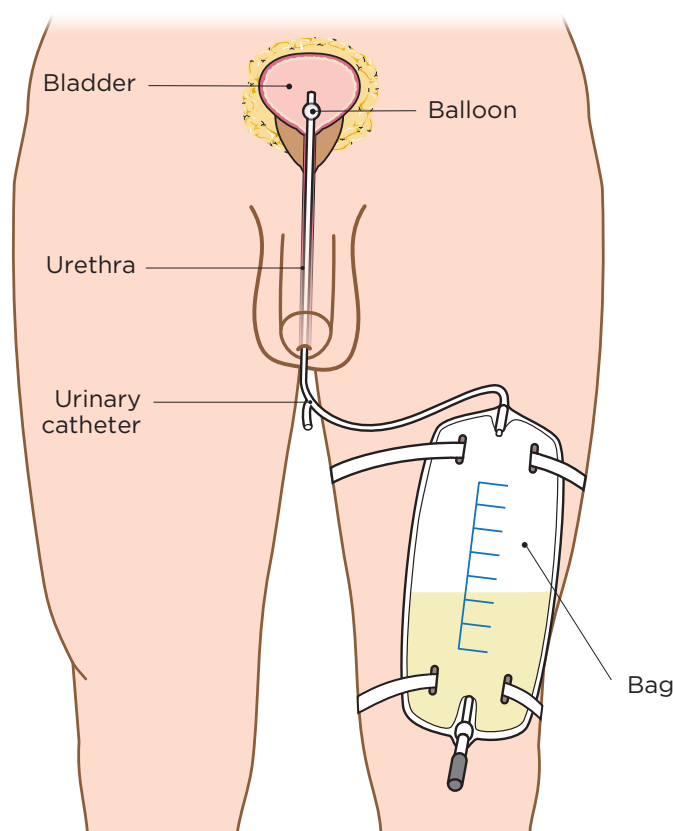


You have just had a catheter inserted in your bladder. This fact sheet explains how to take care of this bladder catheter once you get home.

## What is a bladder catheter?

This is a flexible tube inserted in your bladder. At one end of the catheter, a small balloon is filled with liquid to hold it in place. The other end comes out of the body through the urine outlet channel (urethra) and is connected to a bag. It collects the urine, which flows continuously.

Bladder catheter in place



The bag is attached to the side of the thigh with elastic bands. At night, you'll put another bag at the end of the first one. In this way, you can collect urine all night long.



### CAUTION

At night, the second bag should always be lower than your hips. You can attach it to the side of the bed. If that isn't possible, just put the bag on the floor.



## Why do I need a bladder catheter?

Normally urine comes out of the bladder without difficulty. But it may not always be possible to empty your bladder. This could be due to surgery, childbirth, prostate disease, urinary tract infection, etc.

The catheter empties the bladder and prevents pain and damage to the kidneys.

## For how long will I need to have the catheter?

It can stay in place for one to several weeks. The doctor will decide when is the best time to remove it. He or she will give you a follow-up appointment to assess whether it's possible to remove or change it. If you're waiting for surgery, the catheter will remain in place until the operation is done.



### APPOINTMENT

Date : .....

Place: .....

Doctor: .....



### Notes


## Will it be uncomfortable for me?

After the bladder catheter is inserted, you may feel:

- involuntary bladder contractions (spasms)
- cramps
- an urge to urinate
- leaking around the catheter

This is normal and can last a few days. If this happens often or if it bothers you, call the nurse at your CLSC. Outside of CLSC business hours, you can call a nurse at the **CHUM Patient Health Line** at **514-890-8086**.



**Call also if you have any pain, because the catheter should not cause pain.**

## How do I take care of it?

### Thigh bag

You'll need to:

- **Empty the thigh bag at least every 6 hours.**

The bag is fitted with an anti-reflux valve, so you can sleep without the risk of urine flowing back up the catheter. But don't wait until the bag is too full before emptying it. If the bag is too full, it could come loose or pull on the catheter.

- Change the bag every 7 to 10 days. If you notice that your urine is thick and a bit sticky, and that emptying it is difficult, change your bag. Otherwise, deposits could stick to the walls of the bag and get into the filter.



### Night bag

You'll need to:

- Attach the night bag at bedtime. Remove and empty it when you get up in the morning.
- Change the night bag every 30 days.

## What supplies will I need to look after the catheter?



### Are there any precautions I need to take BEFORE doing the care?

Always wash your hands with soap and water before and after handling the bladder catheter and bags, to avoid the risk of getting a urinary tract infection.

### What should I pay attention to with a catheter?

Pay attention to the following points:

- To dispose of a used bag, empty it completely, put it in a plastic bag or newspaper, and then put it in the trash. The hospital will give you a spare bag. After that, you'll need to obtain the necessary supplies yourself.



- Make sure the tube of the bag is securely attached to your thigh, either with the device supplied by the hospital or with first aid tape, to prevent any pulling on the catheter and the bladder.



- When you remove the night bag, empty it completely.
- Drink a lot, up to 2 litres a day (or follow your doctor's instructions).
- Only take showers (no baths). Be sure to empty the bag before showering. Wash the catheter and your genitals every morning and evening with soap and water and dry everything thoroughly.
- Don't put any talcum powder or cream not prescribed by your doctor in the area around the tube.

## What signs should I watch for?

Here's what you need to be careful about. Call the **CHUM Patient Health Line** if you have any of these signs or if there is no improvement after trying the solutions they propose.

- You have fever (38°C or higher), chills, or don't feel well.



- You notice a little blood in the urine. Drink plenty of water, unless it is contraindicated by your health care team.

**If you see blood clots or a lot of blood in your urine (dark red urine), you should go to the emergency room.**

- You don't see any urine flowing and you start to feel discomfort in your bladder.  
Check to make sure the catheter tube isn't folded and drink water.
- Urine is flowing around the catheter because of bladder "spasms". Women can wear a pantiliner and men can wrap their genitals in a washcloth. Call if the spasms are too painful or too frequent.
- You have signs of infection:
  - pain in your abdomen or back
  - sensation of stinging or burning in the bladder
  - cloudy or strong-smelling urine
- Your bladder catheter falls out or breaks. Don't try to reinsert it. As soon as possible, call the phone number you were given.

## Who can I contact for help or to ask questions?

Your CLSC nurse will give you contact information so you can reach a professional 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Weekdays, from ..... a.m. to ..... p.m.:

Tel.: .....

Evenings and weekends:

Tel.: .....

Clinic at the CHUM:

Tel.: .....

If you can't reach one of these professionals, call the **CHUM Patient Health Line**.



### CHUM PATIENT HEALTH LINE

**514 890-8086**

**24 hours a day, 7 days a week**

You're a CHUM patient? You have questions about your health status? A nurse can help you.



### USEFUL RESOURCES

Other CHUM health fact sheets are available. Ask your care team which fact sheets can help you.



You can also read them online.

[chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante](http://chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante)

*The content of this document in no way replaces the advice of your healthcare professional.*

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal  
**chumontreal.qc.ca**



Follow the steps below carefully.

### THIGH BAG

#### EMPTYING THE THIGH BAG

- 1 Stand over the toilet.  
Turn the valve lever downwards.



- 2 Empty the bag. Close the valve.  
Re-attach the bag to your thigh.



#### CHANGING THE BAG

- 1 Wash your hands. Spread out a clean towel.  
Take the new thigh bag and tube out of the bag. Put them on the towel.



- 2 Remove the cap from the nozzle of the new bag.

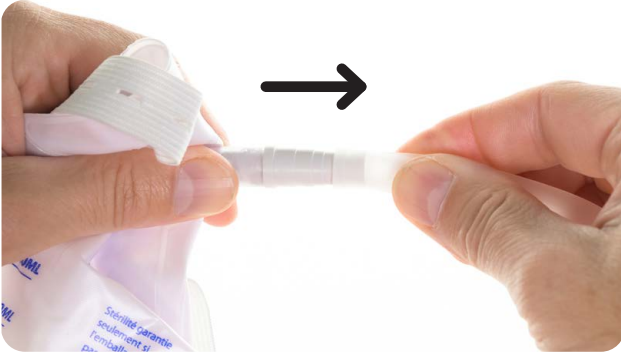


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## CHANGING THE BAG (continued)

- 3** Attach the bag to the tube. It's normal to have to push hard to do this.



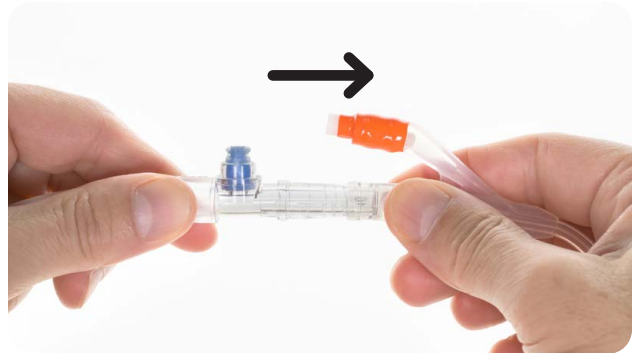
**Careful!** Don't touch the nozzle of the bag or the tip of the tube. If that happens, disinfect them with an alcohol swab.



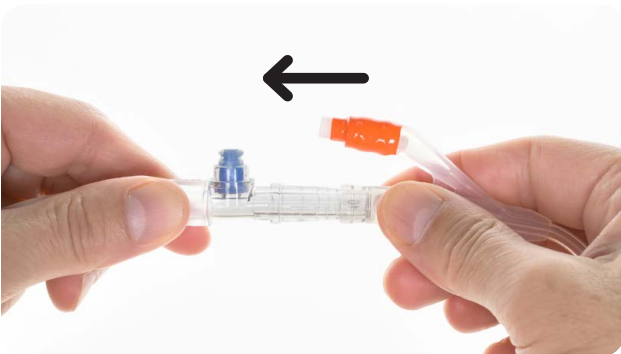
- 4** Place the catheter connector on the towel.



- 5** Disconnect the old bag from the catheter.



- 6** Remove the cap from the new tube. Reconnect the tip of the connector to the catheter.



**Careful!** Don't touch the nozzle of the bag or the tip of the tube. If that happens, disinfect them with an alcohol swab.



## NIGHT BAG

### ATTACHING THE NIGHT BAG

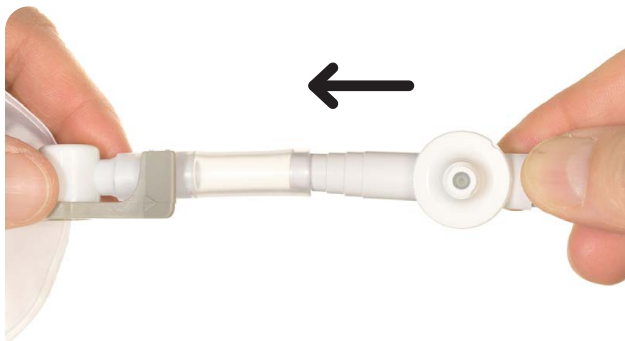
- 1 Remove the protective cap from the night bag. Store the cap in a clean location.



- 2 Disinfect the tip of the night bag.



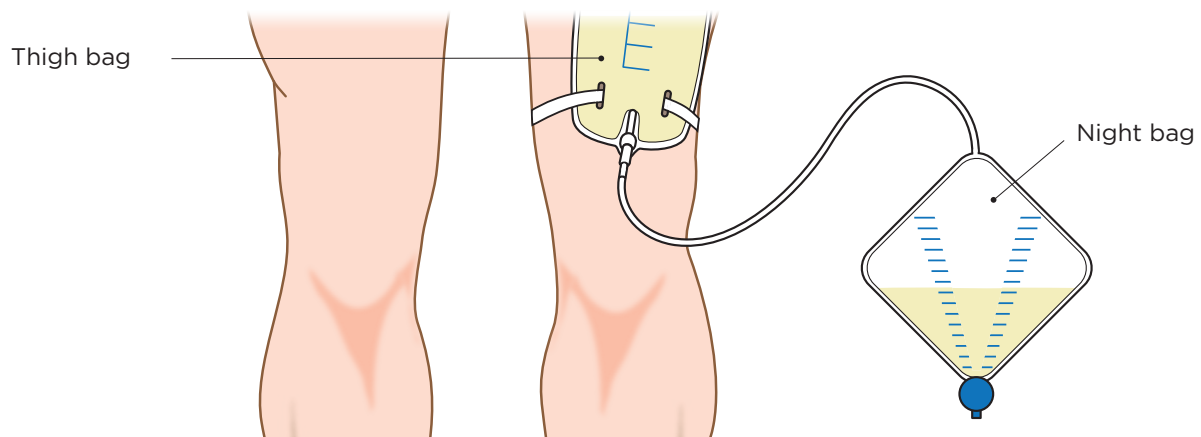
- 3 Connect the night bag to the bottom of the thigh bag. Attach the thigh bag to the leg on the side where you'll put the night bag. Example: on the left thigh if you'll be putting the night bag on the left side of the bed.



- 4 Turn the valve lever downwards to open it. Attach the night bag to your bed or put it on the floor for the night.

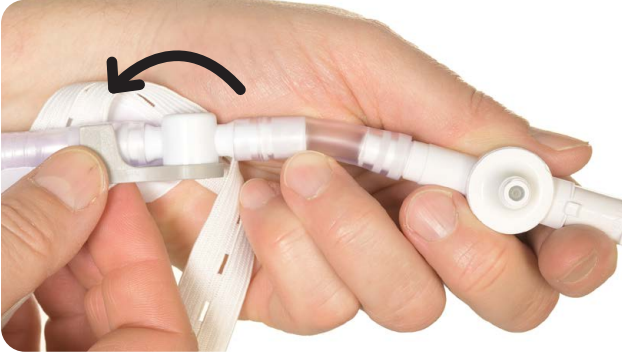


### Night bag connected



## EMPTYING THE NIGHT BAG

- 1 Close the valve on the thigh bag. Disconnect the night bag from the thigh bag.



- 2 Disinfect the tip of the night bag. Replace the protective cap.



- 3 Hold the night bag over a toilet. Turn the valve to the “open” position. Be careful not to touch the edge of the toilet with the valve tip.



- 4 When the bag is empty, turn the valve back to the “close” position. A click tells you that it’s closed.



### Questions


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