

A catheter can cause some problems. It can allow germs to get into your urine and bladder and cause infections.

## How do I know if I have an infection?

If you have an infection you may have a fever, lower back pain or tenderness, chills or confusion. Let your nurse or doctor know straight away. Your catheter will need to be changed and your urine tested.

## How can I avoid infections?

- Always wash your hands before and after touching your catheter.
- Shower as usual when you have a catheter. Do not disconnect your catheter from the leg bag when having a shower. Your thigh strap should remain on and a dry one put on after showering. Leg bag straps should also stay on during showering and replaced with dry ones after.
- Everyday wash around the area where your catheter enters your body. Wash with warm water and a soap alternative. Ordinary soaps will dry and irritate your skin. Your nurse can help you to choose the right soap.
- When washing around the catheter it should always be done in one direction. Men who have a foreskin must wash under it and always put it back in its original place. Women should wash in a front to back direction.
- Try to drink 2 litres or more of liquids per day (unless your doctor tells you not to). This helps to flush out your kidneys and bladder. If your urine is dark yellow it means that you haven't been drinking enough.



Hydrated

Dehydrated

- Everyday check for skin redness or sores around your catheter.
- Do not use powder or sprays near where the catheter goes into your body.
- It is normal to have small amount of mucous (clear, sticky fluid) around your catheter. If you are worried talk to your doctor or nurse

## How can we help?

There are six Me and My Catheter self-care sheets available.

- Sheet 1 - What is a catheter and why do I have one?
- Sheet 2 - How do I care for my catheter and bags?
- Sheet 3 - How do I change a leg bag and connect the night bag?
- Sheet 4 - How can I avoid infections?
- Sheet 5 - What do I do if something goes wrong?
- Sheet 6 - How can I get more equipment?

If you have any questions or would like to find out about other self-care options, you can contact Bolton Clarke, the National Continence Helpline or your trusted health professional.

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National Continence Helpline 1800 33 00 66. Free telephone service, provided by the Continence Health Australia, that offers confidential information, advice and support.

This resource was developed in partnership with the Continence Health Australia.