



Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust: Information for Families

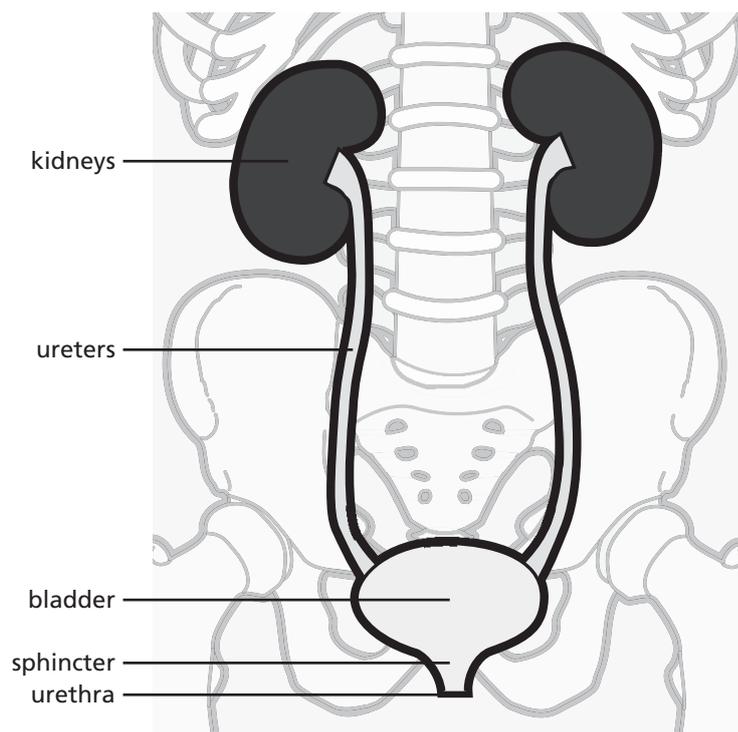
Looking after your child's urethral catheter

This leaflet explains about your child's urethral catheter and how to care for it when you return home.

How does the urinary system work?

The urinary system consists of the kidneys, the bladder, the ureters and the urethra.

The kidneys filter the blood to remove waste products and form urine. The urine flows from the kidneys, down through the ureters to the bladder. From here it passes through another tube called the urethra to the outside when urinating (weeing).



What is a urethral catheter and why does my child need one?

A urethral catheter is used to drain urine from the bladder.

The catheter is inserted into the bladder through the urethra. It is often used after operations to the urinary system as it allows them to rest while they are healing.

In most cases, the urethral catheter is only needed on a temporary basis until the urinary system has recovered from the operation. Sometimes, the catheter can cause bladder cramps or spasms, but we will give you medication to deal with this before you go home.

Bladder spasms can show up as tummy pain or discomfort in the penis or bottom area. Constipation can make the spasms worse, so make sure that your child is eating a balanced diet and drinking plenty of fluids when you are back home. If you are at all concerned about bladder spasms, please telephone the ward.

Equipment

The drainage system consists of the catheter (thin, plastic tube) and a collecting bag. You will also need some tape and new collection bags. We will supply you with everything you need before you go home.



Instructions

- The catheter will remain in place until your child comes back to the ward to have it removed.
- Keep the catheter taped securely to your child's stomach (tummy) so it does not get tangled in clothing. Replace the tape if it becomes loose or dirty.
- Keep the catheter as straight as possible – if it kinks, this will stop the urine flowing properly into the collection bag.
- Keep the collection bag below waist level but off the floor in case it gets trodden on. We can supply you with a shoulder bag to help keep it out of the way.
- Your child should also avoid riding a bicycle or any other straddling toy as the catheter may become tangled.
- Encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids – this will keep the urine flowing, reduce any discomfort and reduce the risk of an infection developing.

Emptying the collection bag

You will need to empty the collection bag at least four times a day

1. Wash your hands
2. Stand or sit your child near the toilet
3. Open the valve at the bottom of the bag
4. Empty the bag into the toilet
5. Close the valve.

Changing the collection bag

You should do this once a week, or if the bag becomes disconnected

You will need:

- A new collection bag.
 1. Wash your hands
 2. Bend the catheter over to stop urine leaking
 3. Remove the bag from the catheter. There is a special valve at the top of the bag so it should not leak urine when you do this
 4. Attach a new collecting bag
 5. Straighten the catheter.

You should call your family doctor GP or the ward if:

- Your child's urine becomes infected – signs of infection include darker than usual, smelly or cloudy urine. Encourage your child to drink more fluids and call the hospital.
- Your child has a sudden bout of pain – this is usually a bladder spasm – encourage your child to drink several large drinks at once.
- Urine is not draining into the bag.
- Urine is leaking into your child's pants or nappy rather than the collection bag.
- The catheter falls out.

If you have any questions, please call the hospital on 020 7405 9200 and ask for the ward from which your child was discharged